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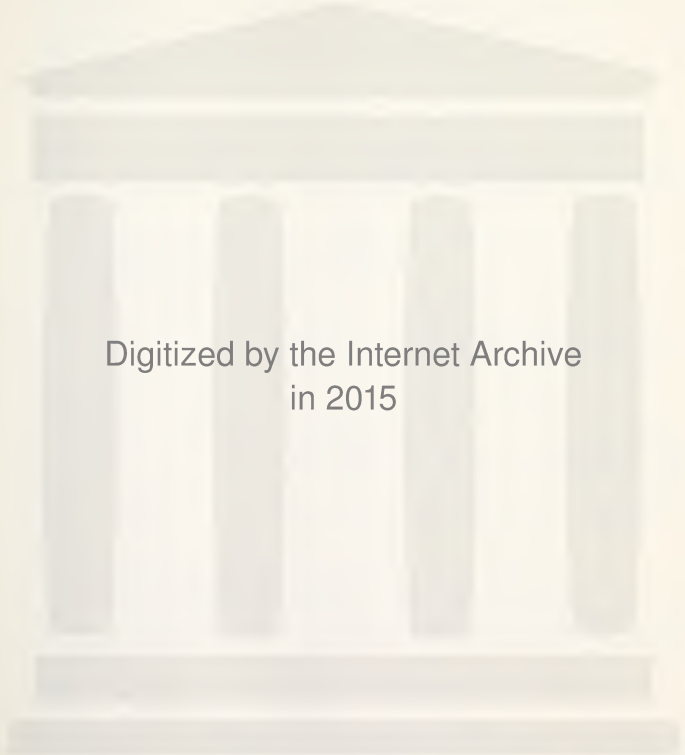

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THE HISTORY

—OF—

THE CHURCH

—OF—

North Middleborough,

MASSACHUSETTS.

IN SIX DISCOURSES, PREACHED BY

ITS ACTING PASTOR,

S. HOPKINS EMERY,

Author of "The Ministry of Taunton."

"Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations."
Moses, in Deuteronomy xxxii: 7.

Published by request of the Church and Congregation.

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Emery, S[amuel] Hopkins, 1815-1901.

The history of the church of North Middleborough, Massachusetts. In six discourses preached by its settled pastor, S. Hopkins Emery ... Pub. by request of the church and congregation. Middleborough, Harlow & Thatcher, printers, 1876.

106 p. 19[cm].

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1. North Middleboro, Mass. Congregational church. 2. Titicut Precinct, Mass.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

North Middleborough, Mass.
1st October, 1875.

Rev. S. Hopkins Emery:

Dear Sir—At a recent meeting of the Congregational Church and congregation in this place, the undersigned were appointed a committee to request the publication of your historical discourses, recently delivered, and to make all the necessary arrangements for the same.

Yours, very truly,

Holden W. Keith.
Elijah E. Perkins.
Solomon White.

The Parsonage.
North Middleborough, Mass.
5th October, 1875.

Dear Brethren:

Your note is received, acquainting me with the action of the Church and congregation to whom I minister. Please accept and express my thanks for the kind consideration of the people, and inform them that the discourses requested for publication are at their service.

Yours, in the love of the Gospel we preach, dear to us, we hope, as to our fathers,

S. Hopkins Emery.

Deacons Keith, Perkins and White.

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TO

THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

OF THE

"JOINING BORDERS OF BRIDGEWATER AND MIDDLEBOROUGH,"

THIS HISTORY

OF THEIR BEGINNING AND GROWTH,

AT THEIR REQUEST PUBLISHED,

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY THEIR FRIEND AND

PASTOR.

THE HISTORY

OF THE

Church of North Middleborough.

For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children. That they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God but keep His commandments.—Psalm LXXVIII: 5, 6, 7.

The successive generations of men, as they come and go, are charged with certain grave responsibilities, suggested in the text, which they are not at liberty to ignore or neglect. It is something more than the treasuring up and faithful transmission of material wealth, of houses and lands, of silver and gold, and such like perishable substance—the corruptible riches—it is the better birthright of "the law and the testimony," which come from God and which stand for what are sometimes called "the oracles of God"—God's teaching and His truth, in whatever form and by whatever messenger He may be pleased to make them known. Alas! We fail to suitably realize the solemn trust committed to us. If, by my humble endeavor of to-day, I may quicken the sense of the sacredness of this trust and call to the remembrance of the men of this generation the work and labor of love of the generations gone before, in all the way the Lord was pleased to lead them, then will my service and ministry of love not have been in vain, in the Lord.

In giving you the history of this Church of Christ, I should regard the account incomplete if I did not take you back to a time prior to any settlement of whites in the town of Middleborough, when the territory was occupied by Indians and was known as Namasket. The Indians were called Namascheucks. They led, of course, a somewhat roving life, but selected the most romantic spots, bordering upon the water, as their headquarters; covering them over with little huts, which became, for the time being, their homes. Such settlements were near the ponds in what is now called Lakeville, on the Namasket river, southeast of the First Parish Meeting-house, and in this part of Middleborough, on the Cohannet or Titicut, Taunton, river. They occupied the high ground on both sides of the river in Titicut, but the hill this side of the river, west of the church, used to be called an Indian fort, and that part of the river was known as the Old Indian Weir. It was in the summer of 1621, only a few months after the Landing at Plymouth, that "it seemed good" unto the little band of Pilgrims, writes *one of their number, "to send to Massasoit, the greatest commander amongst the savages, partly to know where to find them, if occasion served, as also to see their strength, discover the country, prevent abuses in their disorderly coming unto us, make satisfaction for some conceived injuries supposed to be done on our part, and to continue the league of peace and friendship between them and us." It was Tuesday, the 10th of June, 1621, about nine o'clock in the morning, when Stephen Hopkins and Edward Winslow started off on their journey, led by a friendly Indian, Tisquantum. About three o'clock they reached the first Indian settlement in Middleborough on the Namasket river, where they were entertained and fed on "a kind of bread called maizium, the spawn of shads, which were abundant, and boiled musty acorns." Tisquantum told them to go "a few miles further," where they "should find more store and better victuals." "We went and came thither at sunsetting," writes Winslow, "where we found many of the Namascheucks

*Edward Winslow, probably—afterward Governor.

fishing upon a weir, which they had made on a river, which belonged to them, where they caught abundance of bass. These welcomed us also, and gave us of their fish, and we them of our victuals." This was on the hill west, not far from this church, where they also spent the night. Winslow adds: "The ground is very good on both sides of the river, it being for the most part cleared. Thousands of men have lived there, which died in a great plague not long since, and pity it was and is to see so many goodly fields and so well seated without man to dress and work the same."

At this place six Indians joined Tisquantum as an escort to Winslow and Hopkins, on their way to Mount Hope Bay. After a pleasant visit to Massasoit, spending Wednesday night, Thursday and Thursday night, early Friday they commenced their return to Plymouth and again spent a night at this place, reaching Plymouth on Saturday, in time to keep the Sabbath. Titicut—variously spelt Teticut, Tettiquet, and Teightaquid—is said to have been a favorite resort for Massasoit, Wamsutta, Philip, and Chikataubut, the last named, chieftain of the Massachusetts Indians, and "the greatest Sagamore in the country." His favorite domain at Titicut, comprising as it is termed "three miles on each side of the river," was granted by his son, Josiah Wampatuck, to the Titicut Indians, so called, before August, 1644. The Titicut purchase or plantation was carefully guarded ever after in all grants of lands, by the General Court, in this part of the Colony. The grantees were instructed not to encroach on the Indian settlement nor to "molest the Indians." Pomponoho, alias Peter, in 1672, 20th November, deeded all the land north of the river, with certain expressed exceptions, to Nicholas Byram, Samuel Edson and William Brett, in behalf of the town of Bridgewater. Purchases at different times were effected on the south side of the river of Josiah Wampatuck and Tispacan, the Black Sachem, as he was called, so that by 1669 there were sufficient white settlers to secure an act of incorporation as the town of Middleborough. In all these purchases and grants it was understood that the Indians still remaining were not to be molested. There were Indians in Middleborough as in Natick and on

Martha's Vineyard, and many other places, who, under the teaching of Eliot and other like-minded, good men, had become praying Indians. They were so called. They had felt the good influence of Christianity, and had been organized into Christian churches. There were three such churches in this town at the commencement of the Indian war in 1675, one at Namasket, one at 'Sowampset, one at Titicut—that is, one at each Indian settlement. There were ninety members of the three churches. The names of some of the teachers or preachers of the Indian church in this part of Middleborough have come down to us: Nehemiah, Abel, Thomas Sekins, Thomas Felix and John Symons.* "When I came into the place in 1747," writes Rev. Mr. Backus, "John Symons was the minister of the Indian church and continued so for near ten years," when the Indians had for the most part disappeared. Their last land was sold in 1760. Beside John Eliot of Roxbury and John Cotton of Plymouth, Richard Bourne of Sandwich was a devoted laborer among the Indians. He used to visit the churches in Middleborough. The first of the seventh month, 1674, he thus writes: †

"There is good hopes of diverse of them. Some of them being lately dead, having given a good testimony of their being in the faith, and so lifting up their souls to Christ as their Saviour and their All in All, as diverse of the well affected English know, and have been present among some of them that departed this life. I was with one of them, the last summer, that had been sick for a long time, and I staid with him near one whole day, and there came from him very heavenly and savory expressions. One passage I will make bold to insert, the which is this: That he, being very sick, not expecting the continuance of his life, told me that his wife did much solicit him to forsake God and live, forasmuch as many that were not praying Indians were not so afflicted as he was. But he, using those words in Job 11:9, 10, gave her this answer: That he would cleave to God, altho' he died, rather than live and forsake Him."

I have thought it due to the memory of the aboriginal

* Collections of Mass. Hist. Society. 1st series, Vol. III, p. 148.
† Collections of Mass. Hist. Society. 1st series, Vol. I, p. 196.

tribes and first occupants of this soil to take thus much notice of them, especially as I shall have occasion to show you hereafter they were not indifferent to the interests of the whites, and bore no mean part in the early history of this church and parish. Tradition locates their place of religious meeting somewhere on Pleasant Street, and not very far from the present centre of the parish. They did not long continue a separate meeting after the whites set up a meeting, but the few of them who were left fell into their meeting, though I am sorry to be obliged to record it concerning these early settlers, that that they had a distinct pew, one side, out of the way, high up over the stairs, for the colored people—both Indian and Negro—as was the custom in most places, as if God had not made of one blood all nations; and the wonder is that any of them ever attended church. But such was the usage of the times, and the Negro pew has passed away with many another barbarism.

It is time to call your attention to the first act, on the part of the white settlers in this place, towards a distinct parish or precinct and a church meeting. The Petition was as follows:

Province of the Massachusetts Bay. To His Excellency, the Governour, the Honourable Council and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, May 25th, 1743. The Memorial of us, the subscribers, inhabitants part of Bridgewater and part of Middleborough, humbly sheweth, That we being voted off from said towns in order for a distinct Township, did at your Session in May last past, petition for the establishment thereof, our petition being lodged in council, as we are informed, and not acted upon. We do therefore pray that our said petition may be revived and that if your Excellency and Honours do not see meet to set us off a Township that you would establish us a distinct Precinct, according to the bounds of the votes of the towns herewith exhibited, that being our present request unto you. That so we may *enjoy the Gospel privileges among ourselves.* That so we may *worship God,* so as to bring a Blessing on *ourselves* and *children.* And that your Excellency and Honours would remember and act for us, we, your humble petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

I will now read the names of the subscribers to this

Petition. Some of you may recognize among them your own ancestry: Benjamin Shaw, Joseph Leach, Henry Richmond, Francis Eaton, William Hooper, Nathaniel Hooper, Amos Keith, Joseph Crossman, David Shaw, Ezra Washburn, Daniel Casewall, Nehemiah Washburn, Joshua Fobes, Benjamin Washburn, William Bryant, Benjamin Leach, Jr., Ebenezer Shaw, Joseph Harvey, Samuel Keith, Jr., Jabez Cowins, William Aldrich, Israel Washburn, Timothy Leach, David Casewall, Abiezer Edson, Joshua Fobes, Jr., Solomon Perkins, Henry Washburn, Benjamin Washburn, John Keith, Jr., Simeon Leonard, Timothy Bryant, Nehemiah Bryant, James Keith, Samuel Thurston, Lemuel Bryant. "Thirty-seven," they say, "in all," but I fail to make more than thirty-six. Of these, six bear the name of Washburn; four that of Bryant, and four that of Keith; three that of Leach, and three that of Shaw; two that of Hooper, Casewall and Fobes, each—twenty-six; ten others, Richmond, Eaton, Crossman, Harvey, Cowins, Aldrich, Edson, Perkins, Leonard, Thurston, occur but once. I dwell upon these names with some particularity, for doubtless among them and their families are to be found the original members of this Church, of which, singularly enough, no record* has come down to us. The Petition of these thirty-six persons was granted. They were set off by the General Court as a distinct precinct or parish, 25th February, 1743, O. S.,† and held their first meeting for business on Wednesday, the 21st day of March, 1743 or '44, at ten o'clock in the morning, at the dwelling-house of Nehemiah Washburn, in Bridgewater. He was appointed moderator of the meeting

*Since preaching this discourse the record has been found, and of the ten foundation male members in the Church three names are found here, Joseph Harvey, William Hooper and Israel Washburn.

†O. S.—The Old Style in the New England Calendar continued till by act of Parliament in 1752, it was changed in New as well as Old England. Till then the year began the 25th of March. So that events which transpired between the 1st of January and the 25th of March are in one or another year, according as you reckon in the Old or New Style. This will explain the apparent discrepancy of dates in the Petition to General Court, dated May 25, 1743, and the answer to the Petition, the 25th of February, 1743. It was the February following May, and according to the old calendar the same year, but 1744 we should call it now.

and afterward treasurer for the precinct. Amos Keith was appointed clerk. There were also assessors, collectors and precinct committee appointed. They were not yet prepared to "hire preaching," so the records say. "The 25th day of January, 1744, the precinct voted to raise fifteen [*i.e.*, pounds] old tenor, by way of tax, for the support of the minister." The regular precinct meeting was held on the 7th of March, 1744, at the house of Abiezer Edson, when officers were chosen. "The 4th of February, 1745, thirty pounds old tenor" were voted for preaching. At the regular meeting, 31st of March, officers were chosen. Voted, "to have preaching, and to have Mr. Tucker to preach if he may be obtained, and that Abiezer Edson shall board him." This is the first recorded vote as to preaching and a preacher. It is not likely that Mr. Tucker could "be obtained." Nothing more is heard of him. Indeed, in 1746 we find them still at work trying "to gather the forty-five pounds old tenor, formerly voted." And yet they had occasional preaching and supplies during these years. Beside Mr. Tucker we learn the name of Eliab Byram,* who preached in this place about fourteen months, with great success, in 1741–42, and the people were hoping to secure him as their minister, but before the act of incorporation was obtained, setting them off as a separate parish, he had gone to New Jersey and was there settled. After him, Silas Brett, Solomon Reed—who afterwards became their pastor—and John Wadsworth preached, but without making any permanent arrangement. Indeed, so far as we can learn from any record, there was as yet no place other than a dwelling-house, or possibly a school-house, in which to hold meetings. In 1747, the 29th of March, the annual meeting being held at the house of James Keith, it was voted, "to provide materials to enclose and cover the meeting-house"; also, "to see if an answer has been made to a Petition presented to the Great and General Court for the confirmation of a grant of lands given to the precinct by the Indians." The

*Life and Times of Isaac Backus, by Prof. Hovey, p. 68.

subject of a meeting-house had been agitated the preceding year, and it seems that "Indians"—we conclude some of the "praying Indians"—had already "given lands," although all the steps had not been taken or confirmed, which would make the title to them certain. I have taken considerable pains to learn the exact facts concerning these gifts of the Indians to this Precinct. having made a journey to Plymouth to examine the records there for this purpose. I found the recorded deeds of three Indians, who about the same time donated lands to this parish. I made an exact copy of each deed, and it may be of interest to this people to listen to the reading of one of them:

Know all men by these Presents, that I, James Thomas, of Titicut, in the Township of Middleborough, in the County of Plymouth, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England, Indian man, yeoman, minding to encourage the interest and prosperity of Titicut Precinct, (so called,) which consists partly of said Middleborough and partly of Bridgewater, in said County, by giving a certain piece of land to said Precinct for a Meeting House to stand on, for a Burying Place, and for a Training Field, and having obtained liberty and power of the Great and General Court of said Province therefor, have therefore, by virtue of said power and by the consent and advice of my Guardians hereto testified, given and granted, and by these presents do fully. freely, clearly and absolutely give and grant unto the inhabitants of said Precinct, forever, Five acres of land in said Titicut, whereon the Meeting House now stands, bounded as followeth: Beginning at a stake and stones, about eight or nine rods from the northwest corner of said meeting house, from thence running south seventeen degrees east, forty-five rods to a stake and stones near a white oak tree, marked; from thence east seventeen degrees north, eighteen rods to a stake and stones, and from thence north seventeen degrees west, forty-five rods to a stake and stones; from thence west seventeen degrees south, to the bounds first mentioned, together with all the privileges and appurtenances thereof. To have and to hold unto the said inhabitants as free inheritance in fee simple for the uses aforesaid, forever, free and clear from me, my heirs, executors and administrators.

In witness whereof, I, the said James Thomas, have hereunto set my hand and seal, this fifteenth day of August, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and fifty, and in the twenty-fourth year of His Majesty's Reign.

Memorandum.—The interlining between the twenty-first and twenty-second lines was made before signing and sealing, &c.

JAMES THOMAS. [Seal.]

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of

EDWARD RICHMOND.
JAMES KEITH.

The Guardians aforesaid, in testimony of their advice and consent to the above granted premises by the said James Thomas to said Precinct, have hereunto subscribed their names.

JOHN CUSHING.
JOSIAH EDSON, Jr.

Plymouth, ss.—June 27, 1754.

The above named James Thomas personally appeared and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his act and deed. Before me,

JOSIAH EDSON, Jr.,
Just. Pacis.

And Recorded— *Per* JOHN COTTON,
Register.

Received May 17, 1757.

This deed was copied from Plymouth Registry of Deeds No. 44, pp. 98 and 99.

The other two deeds are in the exact terms of the one read, only the one* from Job Ahanton, which donates fifteen acres, declares it to be "for the use of such a Gospel ministry as is established by the laws of this Province, minding to encourage the settlement of a Gospel ministry," and these acres are carefully bounded and described. Also, Stephen David donates eighteen acres and three-quarters, in lieu of fifteen acres before pledged, and which it is more convenient to retain, but these donated acres are expressly declared to be "for the encouragement of settling and maintaining the Gospel ministry in said precinct, agreeable to the good laws of this Province established," and so the

*The original of this deed has come to light. I had the pleasure of exhibiting it to the people on the delivery of a subsequent discourse. It is in the keeping of Mrs. Williams Keith, having come down to her from her father, Mr. Ebenezer Shaw. The land was given in 1750, but the deed was not acknowledged and recorded till 1757.

acres are carefully bounded and described. I learn from one of our oldest men, Mr. Joshua Fobes, a member of this Church, that one, at least, of these three Indians lies buried in your village cemetery. He remembers that the spot was once pointed out to him. He also remembers, when a boy, to have seen this Indian at his father's house. I refer to James Thomas, the one who donated the land—five acres—a part of which is occupied by the meeting house and the parsonage, a part used as a burial place, and a part as this beautiful open space in the centre of the village, so useful and ornamental, called in the deed of the land a "Training Field." I am sure it needs only to be suggested as a thing most suitable and proper, and there are some who hear me who will consider it a privilege to contribute toward a memorial stone * of some kind, either in the burial ground or

*I have been requested to prepare an inscription for such a stone, and there is no doubt in due time it will be erected, "sacred to the memory" of these friendly Indians. In anticipation of such an event Mrs. Eleanor S. Deane of Taunton has kindly written, at my request, the following verses, which I am permitted to publish:

ON THE OCCASION OF ERECTING A MONUMENT TO THE THREE INDIANS.

Three hundred years ago the soil we tread—
The pleasant field, the orchard, meadow, street,
This place wherein we lay our honored dead,
Was trodden only by the red men's feet.

Here rose their villages among the trees;
In sunny hollows here their councils met;
And, noiselessly as steals the evening breeze,
Their swift canoes shot down the Tetiquet.

No wrong forgave they, no good deed forgot—
This, between man and man, their simple code;
While, with forgotten, cruel rites, they sought
To win the favor of an unknown God.

Then, rumors reached them of another race,
Rearing strange piles for homes, wherein to dwell;
Few, fearless and yet friendly, pale of face,
And using speech their wise ones could not tell.

And they were visited by two of these,
Pausing among them at the eventide,
Who with them ate, and smoked the pipe of peace,
And at the dawn passed onward with their guide.

And they became, as their slow years went by,
Familiar with the white men and their speech;
Heeded their counsel given, and willingly
Listened to one who came of God to teach.

on the public green, which shall record the names of these three Indians—James Thomas, Job Ahanton and Stephen David—who together contributed thirty-eight and three-quarters acres of land to this parish in the very beginning of its existence; which land includes the present site of this sanctuary, the location of the parsonage, the public green, and the still more sacred ground where rest your dead. The grant of these lands must have been made several years before it was confirmed by the General Court, or made a matter of record as I have read to you. The frame of a meeting house, or of some building deemed suitable for a meeting house, appears to have been in existence "near the house of Mr. Abraham Barden," which the proprietors, for a consideration, quit claim to Benjamin White of Middleborough and Benjamin Washburn of Bridgewater, a committee chosen to act in behalf of the precinct. This probably is the frame, which, removed to about the present site of the church edifice, in 1747 "it was voted to enclose and cover." When enclosed and covered it still remained unpainted. It had no spire, no tower, no bell, no place for a bell. It was

And some there were who did the Word receive;
These walked among their tribe as praying men,
Taught by His love, who died for them, to live
As ever in His sight—Himself unseen.

And the first church of Christ upon this ground
Was formed of members of that dusky race,
Who taught the woodland echoes to resound
With words of prayer and hymns of lofty praise.

And the pale people came and with them dwelt,
And tilled the soil and practiced arts of peace;
With their red brethren in their worship knelt
Upon the thymy sod beneath the trees.

And when our fathers, in those early days,
Resting within the dwellings they had reared,
Like David in his cedar house, would raise
To God a house of worship, there appeared

Three men—their names are here upon this stone—
Who proffered acres of their hunting ground
For church and pastor's house to stand upon,
For training field and for a burial mound.

The deeds of gift were duly registered;
They may be seen in Plymouth town to-day.
From the same spot the preacher still is heard,
And still our dead beneath this turf we lay.

simply a barn-like building, a mere frame, covered and enclosed. It had three doors of entrance, on three sides, called the east, west, and south doors. Its windows were small, with diamond shaped glass. It had no means of warming in the coldest winter's day. An occasional foot-stove gave out the smell and warmth of fire. But this was a luxury all were not supposed to be able to possess. This spot, in that early, ancient time, was more beautiful and attractive than now. I describe it as some of the older people remember it. It was a pine forest. Beautifully shaded in the heat of summer was the house of God. The whispering of the pines mingled with the praises of God's people, as they met here from week to week to worship God. Verily the trees of the field did clap their hands. The little hills rejoiced on every side. How still and quiet were those sweet days of sabred rest! How strong was the attraction of the simple, unpretending, plain, place of worship which stood here, to the few families, on either side of the river, which were wont to gather within its consecrated walls to meet God and hear Him speak to them through His written Word, or the mouth of His ministering servants!

But I have already detained you too long. We will pursue, if we are not able to finish, the history of this church in the afternoon.

DISCOURSE II.

PREACHED JUNE 6th, 1875.

For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers. Shall not they teach thee and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?—Job viii: 8, 10.

In the morning we began this search of the fathers, and our inquiry was of the former age. Let us pursue the search and see what these past generations will teach us and tell us to our profit. We had hardly reached the time of the establishment of what might be termed a permanent ministry in this place. There were occasional supplies and the labors of itinerant preachers. No meeting house was built and finished. No church organized. Precinct and parish meetings were held at private houses. So, also, were preaching services, on both sides of the river. During the year 1747 there were few, if any such, services. The controversy, which at this time raged throughout New England, especially in Connecticut between what were called the New Lights, or new measure, revival men and the old established churches more stiff, staid and formal in their ways—this controversy reached the Titicut plantation, and was quite heated in all this region. Those of you who have

read the history of those exciting times when Whitefield, Davenport and the Tennents were in the midst of their evangelist movements, when President Edwards, Bellamy and Hopkins were at the height of their power and commanding influence, need not that I should go into details. It was the period of the Great Awakening, as it has been called, or rather I am coming to a period, when there may be said to have occurred a reaction and a sad decline. The Great Awakening was in 1740. There were sad divisions, even among good men, concerning methods and measures. It is most melancholy, the narrative of party feeling and party strife, crimination and recrimination, in connection with the extraordinary efforts which were then put forth for the extension of Christ's kingdom. The Prince of Peace could hardly have looked down upon all that transpired with His favor. Alas! How many crimes have been committed against God and man at such times of wicked provocation, and what fearful breaches of the good law of christian fellowship and brotherly love! The commotion was felt here. All these years of which I have been speaking, from 1743, when the precinct was set off, to 1747, no church organization had sprung up, for the reason, probably, that the churches in the vicinity, and those in this precinct who would be likely to constitute the church, were not quite certain whether it should be an Old Light or a New Light Church. At length, about the 1st of December, 1747, Rev. Nathaniel Shepherd of Attleborough preached and prepared the way for Rev. Joseph Snow, pastor of a New Light Church in Providence, and Rev. Isaac Backus,* then a

*"My mother sprang from the family of Mr. Winslow, who came over to Plymouth in 1620, and my father from one of the first planters in Norwich in Connecticut, in 1660. My father, Samuel Backus, was born in Norwich, January 6, 1693, and Elizabeth Tracy, my mother, on April 6, 1698, and they were married January 18, 1716. Both they and their parents were members of the First Church in Norwich, and trained up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I was born there January 9, 1724, and was well educated in the Christian religion and also in the principles of civil liberty." Rev. Silas Hall writes: "The place where Mr. Backus administered the ordinance of baptism when at home, and where he practiced immersion, was in a stream of water but a few rods from his dwelling"—and this dwelling is well known to those of this generation as having been on Plymouth Street, and is now occupied by a grand-son.

young man and a young minister, from Norwich, Connecticut. They were both revivalists, and in ten days preached twenty-four sermons. They preceded and accompanied their preaching with much visiting and free intercourse among the people. They speak of being "kindly entertained at the house of Seth Hayward, a christian brother in Bridgewater," and they also name "brother Samuel Alden of Titicut." These and other brethren gave Mr. Snow a cordial welcome, as he had been among them before. They were so pleased and profited by the preaching of Mr. Backus as to request him to remain with them. Mr. Backus seems to have had great freedom and fullness of soul in speaking, for he says of it on one occasion: "Divine truth seemed to flow through my soul like a river, and it was easier to speak than to refrain. Thus I went on for several hours, and the saints were greatly refreshed, while many sinners were struck under conviction." Again he writes: "I preached from the second Psalm, and had, perhaps, greater freedom and assistance than ever before in my life. Glory to God alone!" If there had been a dearth of preaching during the year 1747 there was not likely to be during 1748. Mr. Backus preached thirty sermons during the month of January. A good deal of interest was awakened. The meetings alternated between the Bridgewater and Middleborough side of the river. The meeting house does not appear to have been quite finished and ready for steady occupancy. But the time has come for a church to be organized without waiting for the full consent of all the neighboring churches. Accordingly Articles of Faith* and a

*These Articles of Faith and the Covenant are found in a very valuable book of records, which fortunately has just come to light. I express my obligations for it to Mr. Joseph Backus, grand-son of Rev. Mr. Backus, who occupies the minister's homestead. The manuscript has the following title:

The Records of the Church of Christ in the Joining Borders of Bridgewater and Middleborough.

It is to these I am indebted for the facts in the ministry of Rev. Mr. Backus, which follow. Thus are the records of the Church rendered complete from the beginning. The first printed manual of the Church was in 1831, soon after the Great Awakening of that year and is styled, "Covenant of the Titicut Precinct Congregational Church in Middleborough and Bridgewater." This was followed by a publication in 1852, prepared by the pastor, Rev. Mr. Bliss.

Covenant were drawn up, and on the 16th of February, 1747 O. S., 1748 N. S., sixteen persons signed them, "solemnly," as "in the presence of God," quoting from the records, after having "met together several times for prayer and declaring what God had done for their souls, one to another." Those that signed were Jonathan Woods, Joseph Harvey, William Hooper, Ephraim Leach, Onesimus Campbell, Samuel Alden, Joseph Phinney, Israel Washburn, James Hooper, Joseph Harvey, Jr.—ten men; Leah Washburn, Ruth Leach, Sarah Leach, Esther Fobes, Abigail Fobes, Abigail Fobes, Jr.—six women. "These all signed that day," the records state, "sixteen in all." There were received to the church, at different times in 1748, eighteen men and twenty-six women; in 1749, one woman; in 1750, two women; in 1752, one woman; making a total, from the beginning, of sixty-four. But some of these seem to have fallen away, or withdrawn, and to have been so exercised on the subject of baptism, its modes and subjects, as to have lost their evidence of acceptance as God's children, and failed in the sympathy and communion of saints. Thus there were frequent councils—five in all—and renewals of covenant and attempts at discipline, and the actual number of living, working members in 1752, and onwards to 1756 when Rev. Mr. Reed came, must have been much smaller than the nominal number. It has been said that the Church really died out and became extinct. I think not. There is nothing in the records just come to light to indicate it. Not the slightest hint of it. It was weakened and reduced by the constant agitation of the question of baptism. Many left and lost their interest, and at length a Baptist Church of six members was formed; but if all beside this element had left and there was nothing, save this, remaining in the old Church, certainly there had been no need of organizing anew as a Baptist Church. We are sure the precinct, the parish, remained. The Church also remained. We have no knowledge of the organizing of any other church than the Baptist, after February 16th, 1748. The Confession of Faith and Church Covenant that day signed and adopted do not

differ–and I have carefully compared them–from those now used by this Church in its admission of members. To complete the history of the Church, as given in these records: "At a meeting of the Church of Christ in Bridgewater and Middleborough, on March 31, 1748, after united and fervent prayers to God, they had clearness to go on in the choice of church officers;" and they not only chose Rev. Mr. Backus to be their pastor, but Jonathan Woods and Israel Washburn to be deacons. There is a full account of the arrangements for the ordination and installation of Rev. Mr. Backus as pastor, the 13th of April, 1748, of the churches sent to, and the ministers who took part on that interesting occasion.* The records also present quite fully the history of the councils called by this Church to settle difficulties. The pastor of this Church, and delegates, bore part in ten councils held elsewhere. The sacrament of the Lord's supper was appointed to be observed once in two months. In 1751 two brethren, James Mead and William Smith, were dismissed "to embody together," say the records, "into a church where they live, at Beach Woods in one edge of Middleborough." There is a record of infant baptisms in 1748 and 1749—sixteen in all—a larger number certainly than in any other two years of the history of the Church, and a larger number than during the entire pastorates of other ministers. In 1752 there were cases of re-baptism by immersion, and I have been interested in finding in connection with this, "Lord's Day and sacrament day, June 21," such a notice as the following: "Mary Washburn and Esther Hayward did publickly give up their daughters, infants, unto God and to y^e^ watch and care of this Church, and did

*"Brother Snow of Providence preached the ordination sermon from Matthew XXVIII: 19, 20, with considerable power. Then the pastor gave a particular account of his experiences as to his conversion, his call to preach and his call to this people, and they gave some account of their experiences as to receiving him, which gave good satisfaction to the brethren. So they proceeded to ye installation. The Church chose Bro. Israel Washburn to be one to lay on hands. Bro. Cleaveland of Canterbury made y^e^ first prayer. Bro. Paine of Canterbury gave ye charge. Bro. Hide of Norwich gave ye right hand of fellowship, and Bro. Washburn of this Church made y^e^ last prayer. It was a solemn and refreshing season to many souls. Glory to God."

engage to train 'em up in His ways. And y^e^ pastor also gave up his son and daughter in like manner." Also, "Lord's Day, June 28. Joseph Phinney and his wife and Phebe Fobes renewedly gave up themselves and their all to God, and to go on with this Church in His ways as He should direct and assist; and sister Fobes publickly gave up her two children to God and the care of His people and engaged by Divine help to train 'em up in His ways." This renewal of covenant on the part of church members was not uncommon, as, "Lord's Day, August 9," same year, James Hooper, John Hayward, Mary Caswell, Alice Heford and Anna Leach came in, renewedly engaging to go on for God with His church, and we had a glorious sacrament together."

Sometime during the year of 1748 the church frame before referred to, and which awaited completion, was so "inclosed and covered" that it could be used as a "public meeting house"; for the precinct annual meeting in January, 1749, was held there, we are informed, "for the first time." During this and the six following years, that is, till the 16th of January, 1756, Mr. Backus acted as pastor and preacher to this Church. At that date, Isaac Backus, Timothy Bryant, John Hayward, Susanna Backus, Mary Caswell and Esther Fobes—six in all, two brethren and three sisters, beside Mr. Backus—"entered into covenant as a Baptist Church," * which still exists and holds in deserved reverential remembrance the name and work of Isaac Backus. He was a man of remarkable vigor of mind, and true to his convictions of truth and duty. There is hardly

* A large number of ministers have gone forth from this, the First Baptist Church of Middleborough, which has well earned the title, not only, of mother of churches, but of mother of ministers; the list being as follows, quoting from Dr. Hovey, in his "Life and Times of Backus": James Mellen, Abner Lewis, Asa Hunt, Elijah Codding, Job Macomber, Samuel Nelson, David Leonard, Zenas Lockwood Leonard, Stephen Smith, Nelson Lewis Leonard, Silas Hall, Thomas Conant, George Leonard, William Harrison Alden, David Weston. The last named recently died, having filled, with great promise of usefulness and eminence in his profession, the office of Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Madison University, Hamilton, N. Y., deeply lamented by all who had watched his progress and had such high hopes concerning his future.

another in the whole range of the denomination of Baptists who has, in his day and generation, wrought a greater work in their service as well as of the common Master. His was a long and laborious life, beginning in its ministerial work with this people in 1747, and not closing till the year of his death, among his own loved church, in 1806—making full three score years of privileged preaching service. He was a great worker through all these years. It was not uncommon for him to average a sermon a day in his preaching, both at home and abroad, during several months. He made frequent and long missionary tours. The list of his published writings* is large. At the ripe age of eighty-two† years and ten months he was called home to the rest and reward of Heaven. His body lies by the side of other ministers‡ of the place in the neighboring cemetery, awaiting the call of the resurrection trump.

In the account of the precinct meeting, 4th of June, 1756, we find the following vote: "Put to vote whether the

*More than thirty sermons and essays on various subjects, the history of the Baptists in three volumes and an abridgement in one volume. A Memoir of the Life and Times of Rev. Mr. Backus, by Rev. Dr. Alvah Hovey of Newton Theological Seminary, was published in 1859.

†When more than eighty years old, Mr. Backus wrote: "November 29, 1749, Susanna Mason of Rehoboth became the companion of my life for nearly fifty-one years, and the greatest temporal blessing God ever gave me; for which I trust I shall praise Him to eternity." Dr. Hovey adds concerning her: "She appears to have possessed, in large measure, those womanly virtues which make home peaceful and attractive. She was devout, training up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." She died November 24, 1800, having been the mother of nine children, all of whom reached adult age. Their names were Hannah, Nathan, Isaac, Eunice, Susanna, Lois, Lucy, Simon, and Sibel. The last died at the age of twenty, in 1788. The rest all lived till the present century, and all but one survived their father.

‡Backus, Reed, Gurney, Colby—the first four pastors of the Church, from 1748 to 1851, more than a full century—lie side by side with members of their families and many hundreds of their flock. The inscription on the memorial stone of Mr. Backus is as follows: "Here lie deposited the remains of the Rev. Isaac Backus, A. M., who departed this life November 20, 1806, aged eighty-two years and ten months, in the sixty-first year of his ministry. As a Christian and minister, the character of this man was truly conspicuous. As the pastor of a church in this town, for fifty-eight years, he was eminently useful and beloved. His domestic and relative duties, as a husband and parent, were discharged with fidelity, tenderness and affection. His zeal and persevering industry in the cause of civil and religious liberty, through a long, laborious life, is still manifest in his writings as an historian of the Baptist denomination and defender of the truths of the doctrines of Christ. Having uniformly borne testimony in his life, conversation and ministry, of

Precinct would sell the pew ground in the meeting house and appropriate the money towards finishing said meeting house. Voted in the affirmative, and made choice of Messrs. Ephraim Keith, David Alden and Abiezer Edson, precinct committee, to sell the pew spotts in said house to the highest bidders, and improve the money as aforesaid." This was accordingly done the 21st day of October, 1756. The bids were made "in furnace credit, to be paid the next blast, and security given." So it seems the meeting house, the frame of which was bought in 1747, is not yet finished in 1756. Our fathers made haste slowly in those early times, which tried men's souls. The record of the sale of "pew spotts," as they are called, sounds strangely in our ears today: "No. 1, on y^e^ west side of the pulpit, being 7 feet long and 5½ feet deep, was sold to Mr. James Keith, at £110 old tenor, furnace credit," and so on. "No. 5" was "under the men's stairs." "No. 8" was "under the women's stairs." The men and women had stairs and seats separate and distinct, even as the Quakers do to the present day. The records speak of the "men's side" and the "women's side" of the house. It was "Thursday, the 21st day of October, 1756," the same day on which the "pew spotts" were sold, that it was "put to vote, whether the Precinct would concur with the Church, in giving y^e^ Rev. Mr. Solomon Reed a call to the work of the ministry. And voted in the affirmative, viz: that they did concur. Put to vote, whether s^d^ Precinct w^d^ vote to Mr. Reed the use of the parish lands, during his labor in the work of the ministry. And it passed in the affirmative. Voted the Rev. Mr. Reed

this ardent love to his Divine Master and the doctrine of the cross, in an advanced age he was called from his beloved charge and numerous Christian friends and brethren, to sleep in Jesus and his spirit into the garner of his Heavenly Father, as a shock of corn fully ripe.

God was his portion and his guide through this dark wilderness,
And now his flesh is laid aside, his soul has endless rest."

The ministers who followed Mr. Backus in the Baptist Church, so far as their names appear on the records, kindly copied for me by Miss Robinson, are: Ezra Kendall, Samuel Abbott, Jeremiah Kelley, Asa Niles, Silas Hall, James Andem, Lorenzo Tandy, Samuel Richardson, Alexander McLearn, Joseph Hutchinson; the last named having recently died, much lamented, after a ministry in Titicut of ten years.

sixty pounds lawful money for his annual salary during his stay in the work of the ministry." And his "stay," as some of you know, was to the time of his death—from the autumn of 1756 to the spring of 1785—something over eight and twenty years. This was not Mr. Reed's first field of labor. Graduated at Harvard College in 1739; in 1746 a small number called New Lights withdrew from the church in Framingham, and Mr. Reed became their pastor. His letter of acceptance to the call from this place is dated: "Framingham, November the 17th, 1756. After serious consideration of the invitation, and repeated requests to Heaven for direction in this important case, it appears to be my duty to accept"—is the substance of his answer. He desires such a support that he may give himself "wholly to the work of the ministry." "Earnestly wishing that grace and peace may be multiplied to you, and that you may be Divinely directed in this weighty affair, I rest, yours, to serve in the Gospel of Christ, Solomon Reed." The letter is "directed to Lieut. Abiezer Edson and Ensign Amos Keith, to be communicated to the Church and Society of which they are members." It seems that a church was in existence at this time, and we conclude it was the same church which was organized by Mr. Backus in 1748, the 16th of February—rather more than eight years before. We have heard nothing of its dissolution, neither has there been any notice of the organizing of a new one. Moreover, it is still, probably what might be called a New Light Church. At any rate, they have called a New Light minister to become their pastor. So far as we know, it was with unanimity and cordiality he was so called. His pastorate was life-long; extending as we have seen, through nearly an entire generation—if we call a score and a half of years such. In his letter of acceptance, Mr. Reed alludes to "necessary articles towards building." I conclude the Precinct took hold and helped him make ready a house to live in. Some of you may know where that house was. The older people may have seen it. It was on Pleasant Street nearly opposite the old Hathaway place, and its site is now occupied by a more

modern dwelling. The roof of the old house, in the rear, came down nearly to the ground. There, father and mother, four sons and one daughter, had their home. To each of these four sons, Mr. Reed, by great personal industry and self-sacrifice, was able to give collegiate education. The oldest, John, graduated at Yale College in 1772. He prepared for the ministry under the instruction of his father in this place, and after the Declaration of Independence was for some time chaplain in the U. S. Navy. On the 7th of January, 1780, he was ordained as pastor of the Congregational Church and Society in West Bridgewater, being the third minister of that parish. In 1794 he was elected to Congress and after serving six years, declined a re-election, preferring to return to his pastoral work which he fulfilled for more than fifty years in the place, dying in 1831, in his eightieth year. The Hon. John Reed, of Yarmouth, Member of Congress and Lieutenant-Governor of this State so many years, was a son of his, and grandson of the Titicut minister.

Solomon, the second son of the Titicut minister, graduated at Yale College in 1775, and was ordained as minister of the Congregational Church in Petersham, Mass. This son is remembered "as a man of large frame and great physical power."* During what was called Shay's Rebellion in that part of the State, anecdotes are told of his intimidating the troops who came to Petersham to commit violence.

Samuel, the third son, graduated at Yale College in 1777, and was ordained over the Church and Society of Warwick, Mass., in 1779. He remained with this people till his death in 1812, thirty-three years, greatly beloved and esteemed by them.

Timothy, the youngest son of Rev. Solomon Reed of this place, graduated at Yale College in 1782, and settled as a lawyer in West Bridgewater. The descendants of these four sons are numerous, and through these, the minister of this place a century ago, still lives. Not only were his own sons fitted for college and put into the ministry, but a nephew of

*History of the Reed family by J. W. Reed.

his wife and his own nephew as well—his second wife being a cousin — William Reed was educated, becoming the minister of Easton, where, for a quarter of a century he faithfully labored, and died universally lamented, leaving descendants who delight to honor his memory. This minister of Easton was brother of Mrs. Gurney, the wife of the successor of Rev. Solomon Reed.

Mr. Reed, the minister of this place, was twice married —first, in 1748, to Miss Abigail Stoughton of Connecticut, and again, to his cousin, Sarah Reed. During her maiden life, she was accustomed to say there were three conditions, with which she would not be connected in marriage, viz: with a widower, who had children; with a clergyman; or with her own cousin; and singularly enough, all these were realized in the case of Mr. Reed. They were both natives of Abington, children of William and Jacob, sons of William Reed of Weymouth, whose father, William, settled there in 1635, coming from Gravesend, in Kent, England, that year. Their grandmother was Esther Thompson of Middleborough, and her mother was Mary Cook, daughter of Francis Cook, who came over in the May-flower. Says Ignatius Thompson, who has written a history of the Thompsons, it was not uncommon for Esther's mother, that is, the great-grandmother, of Mr. and Mrs. Reed, on Sabbath morning, after breakfast, to take a child of six months in her arms, and walk to Plymouth, thirteen miles, attend meeting and return home the same day. I conclude she must have risen earlier Sabbath morning, than some of us of this generation, do. Thus allied were the minister and his wife of this parish a hundred years ago. They were of the true Pilgrim blood and strong in the faith of the fathers and mothers of New England, I have no record of the installation of Mr. Reed in the books of this church, but Dr. Davis of Westfield writes in his reminiscences of early ministers, that it was "the 26th of January, 1757" and he adds "he was well esteemed till his death, the 7th of May, 1785, aged sixty-six." It should have been, in his sixty-sixth year—he was born Oct. 22, 1719. The records of the church during this period

are preserved, and are in his handwriting, From these, it appears there were thirty received to the church, supposing the record to be complete; three dismissed to other churches, two cases of discipline. Seventy-five baptisms are recorded, mostly children. One hundred and seven marriages are recorded. There is no record of deaths or funerals. Nine ecclesiastical councils were attended, three of which were called to ordain and install the pastor's sons. There is the record of the choice of four deacons at different times "after solemn prayer to God for His presence and direction"—Mr. Fobes, his first name not given, Samuel Keith, in place of Ephraim Keith declined, Zephaniah Wills and Daniel Leach. It was voted to "sing Dr. Watts' version* of the Psalms for the present" and Messrs. Joshua White, Job Alden, Simeon Alden and Silas Alden were chosen choristers."† The parish records add a few items of interest, viz: "March 31, 1777" among other things done, they "choose Mr. Isaac Perkins to take care of the young people on Sabbath days." Who knows but that some of your fathers and mothers, who were then "young" may have been very much better for this "care"! As an illustration of the fluctuation of money value during the war of the Revolution;‡ in 1779,

*That this people are not given to change, appears from the fact this "version" is still used, supplemented by "hymns and spiritual songs, to which are added select hymns from other authors." After using other collections in other places, it is not altogether unpleasant to come back to a book which connects the present with many a past generation, and has a savor of scripture about it as well as the flavor of the olden time.

†The names of those who have served as choristers have not been recorded, nor are they remembered, but I learn that the choir of this parish for the last fifty years has been remarkably well-trained in church music. Some of its members have obtained a wide reputation as singers and teachers of music, as, Daniel Crane, Daniel Perkins, Cyrus White, Solomon White, Sr. As leaders or prominent members of the choir, in past years, may be mentioned, in addition to the above, Bela Fobes, Solomon Keith, Sumner Keith, Oliver Eaton, Solomon White, Jr., Soranus Wentworth, Otis Pratt, Henry C. White, Earl Ingalls, Charles E. Alden, Lloyd Parsons, Elizabeth Parsons (now Mrs. Albert Pratt), Clarinda Richmond (afterwards Mrs. Seth Fuller), Jane Richmond(afterwards Mrs. Orin Wade). The choir is at present led by Andrew Alden, and consists, besides the leader, of Lysander Richmond and daughter Lucy, Wales Hayward, Bela Fobes, Herbert Alden, Ida Pratt, Laura Wilbur, Helen Sherman, Mary Johnson, Mary Perkins, Mrs. Sybil Leonard, and Mrs. Francana Reed as organist. There was a flourishing band for a long time, and also a choral society, within the limits of the parish.

‡The part which this Parish bore in the Revolutionary war I am unable

there was" voted Rev. Solomon Reed one-thousand pounds for his salary for the year past," the" one thousand" being considered equal to the"sixty pounds" heretofore, and again in 1780, there were voted, "two hundred Spanish milled silver dollars or the value thereof." About this time, the people were exercised on the subject of the meetinghouse, and "pew spotts" were again sold on the "men's side" and on the "women's side", to raise money for repairs. I should judge the precinct was a good deal straightened to keep along and make its payments. They voted in 1784, to allow Mr. Reed his usual salary, sixty pounds, "provided he allow all the paper money he hath received of the parish in years past and which he hath receipted for, to be good in the nominal sum." There was *one* vote, the 6th Sept. 1784, which sounds strange to us in this day and which shows a change in public sentiment for the better. "Voted, to petition the Great and General Court for a lottery to raise a fund in order to support a minister in this parish." At the same time they asked "leave to sell the ministerial lands," which lands, *i. e.* part of them, were subsequently sold, and put into a fund. These lands, I understand, were on Pleasant St. Whether the "lottery" petitioned for, ever came off we do not know. It is to be hoped, not. In 1755, a petition for "a lottery to build a bridge across the great river "was sent in but it seems to me a great shame they should have asked the privilege of a lottery to raise money for the minister. It was not long that Rev. Mr. Reed would need any more of their money for his support. This action was in September, 1784. Their minister died in May, the following year, 1785. There is no record of his death on the church books but in

to give in full, but unquestionably "the joining borders of Bridgewater and Middleborough" fell not behind their neighbors in furnishing men for the common defence. That they were early on the march and in the field, is to be inferred from the story which has come down to us through the children, concerning the battle of Lexington. Two volunteers from this vicinity, who were in the fight, one of whom was wounded, used to say, that after the British had been repulsed and fled, going to a well for water, a poor fellow was found half dead with fright, who had crawled down there for safety, and it was only after assuring him that the battle was over, he could be persuaded to come up. It is safe to say that this man was not recommended for promotion, and that he never drew a pension.

an old family bible of his cousin William was found a coarse half sheet of manuscript, yellow with age but clearly written with a plain hand thereon, appears the following notice:

"Died at his house in Titicut parish, with a lingering illness, on the seventh instant,"—month not named, but we know it to have been May—"the Rev. Solomon Reed, pastor of a church in Middleborough and was interred on the tenth, aged sixty-five. The interment was attended by a numerous concourse, in procession to the meetinghouse, where a prayer was made, and a sermon suited to the occasion from Isaiah 33:20, was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Shaw, of Bridgewater."

You might like to hear the text read: "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities. Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; nor one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." That text was preached from here nearly a century ago, and it is for you to say whether it has been proved true. But to continue our narrative:

"The whole was concluded by a pertinent and pathetic prayer by the Rev. Mr. Porter, while an effusion of tears marked the affliction of the church and people, and testified the respect they bore his memory. The character of Mr. Reed, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and a luminary in the candlestick in which Providence had placed him, was respectable. The advancement of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of his flock and among mankind in general, was a subject in which he was much engaged. He was a workman that needed not to be ashamed, for he rightly divided the word of truth, and gave to every one his portion in due season. The doctrine of the Gospel, which he fervently inculcated in public, and the friendly, pious counsel which he imparted in private, were proved and enforced by his life and conversation. He lived to behold and regret true religion perverted, on the one hand into metaphysical disquisition and vain jangling, and on the other, reduced to a level with natural endeavors and human exertions. That experimental religion which purifies the heart and overcomes the world, was the object which he strove to promote. Its amiable effects were exemplified in his life; its peculiar consolations were powerful in his death. His natural and his spiritual children, the people of his charge and all that knew him, rise up and call him blessed. May we die his death! And may our last end be like his!"

Among the carefully preserved treasures of the Pilgrim Society in Plymouth are a few manuscript sermons of Mr. Reed,* "written in a fine, clear hand, in an easy, flowing style of composition, indicating decided ability." Beside these is also the original of a manuscript journal, kept by him from the 3d of October, 1743 to the 9th of January, 1745. With a few extracts from this journal I shall bring my notice of the Titicut minister to a close:

"1744: 9th January. O Lord, Thou art my God. And Thy loving kindness and faithfulness towards me in looking upon me and redeeming me from my sinful backslidings, notwithstanding all my negligence in seeking of Thee, calls not only for my thankfulness but strong engagements of soul for Thyself. And now, O God, I solemnly renew the covenant I have entered into with Thee, and I am resolved, by Divine grace, to be more careful to keep my covenant with Thee than I have ever yet been. I am resolved never to live one day carelessly, without Thee, as I have done; but, if I should lose Thy comfortable presence, I am resolved, as Thou shalt enable me, to make it my business carefully to seek Thee until I shall find Thee again."

"1744: 27th October. I was guilty in the morning of speaking a word too lightly about Satan and his temptations, or the like, and I had a very heavy charge lying against my soul after this, most all the day, but in the evening my weary, sinking, discouraged soul was comfortably supported and refreshed with a sense of God's mercy and goodness."

"1744: 18th December. Tuesday. I think I felt something of religion in the morning, but I grew dull and careless, accused by conscience and exceedingly sunk down into discouragements in the afternoon."

"Wednesday, 19th December. I was exceedingly barren and lean, and I was very much sunk down under a sense of my guilt and vileness."

"1745: 7th January. Monday. I had some accusations of conscience in the morning, but not totally beaten down."

"Wednesday, 9th January. I felt something of a sweet religious frame of spirit."

"Abington, Sunday, December 23, 1744. Heard Mr. Brown in the afternoon. Monday, I traveled to Duxbury and heard Mr. Whitefield preach in the evening, and then I

*History of the Reed Family.

traveled with him and heard him every day, all the week. Sunday, December 30, preached at Titicut, and we had some token of the Divine presence. I heard Mr. Whitefield again on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at Bridgewater, Easton and Taunton. *N. B.* Mr. Whitefield is exceedingly filled with the spirit of Jesus, and not ashamed of Christ, His cause or children, and a wonderful power attended his administrations. The assemblies seemed much quickened, melted down, and sometimes many were overpowered with a sense of Divine things and crying out. *N. B.* Sometimes, since I have been with Mr. Whitefield, I have felt guilty, low and dull; sometimes I have been sweetly revived and refreshed."

The body of Mr. Reed rests in the village graveyard, by the side of the people to whom he preached. Not one, who ever saw him or heard him, survives him. The last parishioner of 1785 is gone. Ninety years have sufficed to sweep them all away. The oldest man or woman amongst us was then unborn. And who of us will be amongst the living of earth ninety years hence? Where will we be, and what our employments, in the eternal world?

Thanks to Mr. Isaac Pratt, who in 1853 planted "a stone," with a suitable inscription,* "as a tribute of respect by one who," as he tells us, "cherishes the memory of this man of God, as the pastor of his early youth." And near it is a tablet to the "memory of Mrs. Abigail, wife of Rev. Solomon Reed, who died Feb. 6th, 1763, in the forty-ninth year of her age."

Hereafter I hope to pursue the narrative of the history of this Church and its ministry, Messrs. Gurney, Colby, Bliss, Packard, Little, Edwards,—but I have been particularly anxious you should know this earlier history, which comes not within the remembrance of any of you, and concerning which the records are very meagre. In the laudable enthusiasm of our countrymen to rehearse and repeat the story of the nation's birth as an independent nation a hundred years ago, it certainly is becoming in us to

* The inscription gives Hanover College, instead of Harvard, as his alma mater, which is a mistake. His name appears on the Cambridge catalogue, for the year of his graduation. He is erroneously called "the first settled pastor." He was the second, preceded by Rev. Mr. Backus.

call to remembrance the birth and beginning of this church, which stands for independency* in the sisterhood of churches, and as it has not only been born but perpetuated and strengthened, even down to the present time; so let it live and flourish with God's blessing centuries to come,—a lasting blessing to the place, an honored part of Christ's own redeemed, saved church militant on earth, to become a part of this same church triumphant in heaven.

* Although Webster marks the ordinary use of this word for independence obsolescent, he recognizes its use ecclesiastically as still current, with the following definition: "The doctrine that a local church is independent of every other church in respect to government, control or direction." And one who holds to this doctrine, styled an Independent, he describes as "one who believes that an organized christian church is complete in itself, competent to self-government, and independent of all ecclesiastical authority." This accepted definition of Independency and an Independent, consistent with the idea of church fellowship, whether in the form of council or conference of churches, seems to have been the seminal thought of those men, who in 1776, July 4, issued their "Declaration of Independence," and signed their names to the memorable document, with no fear of the King before their eyes. Civil power, according to that declaration, and according to the earlier compact drawn up on board the Mayflower, is lodged in the people, and they elect and define the duties and prerogatives of their rulers. Church power is left by Christ with His church, to appoint officers, who are to exercise such authority as the church chooses to give them, "neither as being lords over God's heritage," writes Peter, who, by some has been supposed to hold the keys of Christ's Kingdom, "but being ensamples to the flock." This is all the power Peter ever coveted or claimed — the power of a good example, and the might of being a man of God, a meek, Christ-like disciple. "And, when the chief Shepherd shall appear," is the promise and encouragement for all time from the pen of this Apostle; "Ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

DISCOURSE III.

PREACHED JULY 18th, 1875.

Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.—PSALM XLV.: 16.

In this wonderful messianic psalm occurs the promise which is full of cheer and comfort to such as sometimes take a desponding view of the future of Christ's church. Men die—the choicest and the best—"Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?" Alas! "The godly man ceaseth, and the faithful fail from among the children of men." Who shall take their place? Who will live when such men die? How is the church of Christ to be kept alive? What will become of the ark of the Lord? Alas! alas! What shall we do? "Help, Lord!" And then breaks in upon the gloomy, desponding soul, too little believing these words of promise and gracious assurance, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children." Ah! blessed Lord, we accept Thy word as true, and desire to draw comfort from this "sure word of prophecy."

Encouraged by the interest you expressed in my former attempt to give you the history of this ancient church, I to-day resume the work where I then laid it down, in the year 1785, at the death of Rev. Solomon Reed, just ninety

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years ago. Not a parishioner of that ancient time survives. All, all are gone! The most aged among us were then unborn. After Mr. Reed's decease, it is probable the ministers of the neighborhood supplied the pulpit for a season. For on the 17th of May, 1785. just one week after Mr. Reed's burial, it was "Voted, that the Precinct committee give Mr. Timothy Reed, the son of the deceased minister. an order on the treasurer for entertaining the ministers who give us preaching." This is an old custom, in case of a minister's death, thus to fill up a few sabbaths for the benefit of the bereaved family, and as an expression of sympathy to the church, with ministrations of pastors in the vicinity. In August, it was voted to employ Mr. Silas Brett, as a supply, first for four, and then for eight sabbaths. Mr. Brett probably lived near. He had been in the habit of preaching to the people. Mr. Cary also preached a few sabbaths, but during the summer of 1786 there was no regular preaching. The ministerial lots and meetinghouse lot were leased. Not far from this time, a considerable portion of the church lands were sold and the avails put into a fund. In March, 1787, Mr. Job Alden was appointed to entertain ministers who preach, and to secure supplies. He was also authorized to make a few needed repairs on the meetinghouse. About July of this year, Rev. David Gurney began to preach. He interested the people; August 1st they "voted to hire Mr. Gurney two sabbaths more," and then "Aug. 13, four sabbaths more." But they evidently were cautious, and as they were calling a man in those days for life, they wanted to be sure they were suited,—and so, "Sept. 10, the Precinct being met by adjournment, voted to hire Mr. Gurney two sabbaths more." And now having tested the man to their satisfaction, a meeting was called the 27th of September, to consider the question of giving Rev. Mr. Gurney a call.

"September 27th, 1787, the Precinct being met according to notification, voted to choose a moderator by nomination, and made choice of Joshua White, Esq. 2d. Put to vote whether the Precinct will concur with the Church in said Precinct in the call of Rev. Mr. Gurney to be the minister; and the Precinct did unanimously concur with said

Church in said call. 3d. Voted, to give Mr. Gurney by way of encouragement, thirty pounds per year, and the interest of the money the parish lots were sold at, said interest being eleven pounds, ten shillings per year, and likewise the use of five hundred pounds to be paid in building and in lands. 4th. Made choice of Lieut. Isaac Perkins, Mr. Edward Richmond and Mr. Job Alden, as a committee to acquaint Mr. Gurney with the votes of the Precinct with respect to the above call. 5th. Voted, to employ Mr. Gurney to preach with us until he gives his answer. Adjourned to the 25th of October."

At which adjournment, the statement of the salary was changed to be the same as Mr. Reed's, "sixty pounds in cash, or farm produce at cash price, and the interest of what the parish lands were sold for;" and then again the 6th of November, it was again changed from "farm produce" to "corn and rye at cash price." Mr. Gurney's answer to his call was made to this meeting, and was as follows:

"To the third church of Christ in Middleborough, and congregation assembled at said place:

Brethren and Friends: I have taken into serious consideration the invitation you have given me to take the pastoral care of the church and people of God in this place. The importance of the charge, the weight of the calling, the magnitude and extent of the labor, have raised in my mind some painful and anxious exercises, and I trust that your fervent prayers have not been wanting that I might be endowed with wisdom from on high, to direct me in the way of duty in this weighty crisis. I have considered the appearance of unanimity and engagedness that prevails among you for the re-settlement of the gospel ministry in this society, and am pleased with the vigorous, the noble exertions that have been made for the support of a minister. These considerations, together with the unanimous call I have received, and the expressions of friendship toward me, and of desire that I should take the charge of this people in the Lord, have induced me, with cheerfulness to accept of your invitation, and to devote my time and talents to the service of this people according to the directions of our Redeemer; and while I thus give myself to you in the laborious task of the gospel ministry, let me ask your earnest prayers that I may obtain mercy to be found faithful in the service of our common Lord; that I may be inspired with wisdom and prudence to fulfil the important office, that my labors may be crowned with abundant success, and that finally we may

rejoice in the Lord in the kingdom of everlasting glory. The employment, you must be sensible, is arduous and requires the greatest attention, diligence and labour. It is therefore expected that the minister be handsomely supported by the people, and while I offer you my services in the work of the ministry, it is expected that the people proceed upon the proposed plan of raising a fund and establishing it on a permanent foundation. In fine, it is expected that whatever proposals are made, the minister be comfortably and honorably supported by the people, with whom he labors, and with whose care he is entrusted. It is my earnest prayer that the Lord prosper the proceedings of this day, that you and your pastor may long rejoice together, that he may have the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hands, and that by this intended settlement the Kingdom of Christ may be built in this place and throughout the world. (Signed) DAVID GURNEY.

No. Middleborough, Nov. 6, 1787.

This answer was satisfactory to the meeting, and they proceeded to appoint the ordination, "on the first Wednesday in December next." "Mr. Timothy Reed was appointed to make the entertainment for the council and other gentlemen that shall be invited at the ordination." The first entry on the church book by Mr. Gurney appears to be as follows: "December 5th, 1787. The Rev. David Gurney was ordained to the pastoral care of the third church of Christ, in Middleborough. The members of the council were the Rev. Messrs. Shaw, Porter, Angier and Reed of Bridgewater, Turner and Barker of Middleborough, Fobes of Raynham, Niles of Abington, and Reed of Easton." The proceedings of council are not given in full, neither do we know what parts were assigned to the different members in the ordaining services. But a day of ordination in that early time, when settlements were supposed to be for life, was a great event in the history of a parish. Not only the people of the place, but the inhabitants of adjoining towns were drawn together by the announcement of such an extraordinary proceeding, occurring not more than once certainly in a single generation. Mr. Gurney came here as a single man, and boarded with Mr. Job Alden, who, though not a professor of religion at this time, I learn from an aged member of the church, prayed

in his family. On marrying, Mr. Gurney first occupied the house of his predecessor—Mr. Timothy Reed, the youngest son of Rev. Solomon Reed, who lived with his step-mother, occupying a part of the same. In due time he built a house, with the assistance of friends, a house now occupied, in a renovated form, by Mr. Augustus Pratt, on Pleasant Street. Mr. Gurney's wife was Jane Reed of Abington, the niece of Rev. Solomon Reed. Her father, William Reed, is represented as "an earnestly religious man, for many years a leader in the neighborhood religious meetings of his time."* Her brother, bearing the name of his father, was the minister of Easton, who had studied with his uncle, the minister of this parish. In coming to this place as a minister's wife, Mrs. Gurney was not thrown among strangers. Mrs. Reed, the minister's widow, was her aunt, and she had not been an infrequent visitor at her house. It gives me pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness for much of my account which follows, of Mr. Gurney's history, previous to his settlement in this place as well as of his life and labors as the Titicut minister, to one, who is now the oldest living† member of this church, and who was for some years an inmate and intimate friend of her pastor's family. Rev. Mr. Gurney was the son of Mr. Perkins Gurney of East Bridgewater, a farmer in that town. His mother, whose maiden name was Jane Derby, died when David was about eight years old. He had brothers Jonathan, Thomas, Seth, and sisters Jane Ruth and Hannah. When his mother died, David went to live with Dea. Edson of East Bridgewater, who had a grist-mill. David, young as he was, rendered himself useful to the Deacon in his mill. With him he remained not far from eight years, when at the age of sixteen he enlisted as a private soldier in the army of the American Revolution. His military life lasted another eight years, when at the age of twenty-four he began to fit for college with Dr. Jonathan Crane, a member of this church, living in Bridgewater, who

* History of the Reeds.

† Mrs. Nancy, widow of Calvin Shaw, who united with this Church in 1818, 26th of July.

was not only a physician, but a Justice of the peace, and also a licensed preacher. With Dr. Crane he remained two years, when he entered Cambridge College, teaching school in Groton and elsewhere, winters, to help pay expenses, and at length graduating, when not far from thirty. His theological training was with Dr. Shaw of Bridgewater, who was so much interested in his pupil, that he desired him to settle in Bridgewater, but the people of this parish secured those services which continued his lifetime. It is an interesting fact, that the settlement of Rev. Mr. Gurney as the pastor of this people was the very same year as the constitution of these United States was unanimously agreed on by the delegates of the several states assembled at Philadelphia, and by them transmitted to the legislatures of these states, to be by them again submitted to conventions of the people for consideration and adoption or rejection. This constitution was thus agreed on and recommended the 17th of September. Mr. Gurney became the pastor of this people the 5th of December, 1787, and thus continued till the day of his death, the 30th of July, 1815, a period of twenty-seven years, seven months and twenty-five days. The records of the church appear to have been kept by the pastor. The names of seventy persons are given as admitted to the church, not one of whom is now living. Five dismissions to other churches are recorded. There is a record of one hundred and thirty-two marriages. No notice of deaths or funerals. A deacon was chosen in 1799, 31st of July, "after prayer to God for His presence, guidance and direction," Mr. Isaac Perkins; in 1807, 29th of April, were chosen Mr. Elijah Eaton and Mr. Isaac Wilbur. The recorded baptisms during Rev. Mr. Gurney's ministry are eighty-two, of which twenty-nine are of adults, and fifty-three of infants. The number of ecclesiastical councils attended by the pastor is eighteen, and of these sixteen were called to ordain and install ministers, one to dismiss a minister, and one to settle difficulties. The numerous occasions on which the surrounding churches called in the pastor of this church for advice and counsel, become an important testimony to the

high estimate in which they held him as a man of wisdom and good practical sense. This is the opinion which I have formed of him, on inquiry of the aged people who remember him. He commanded the respect and confidence of the community. He was also much beloved. In some families, his name is registered and remembered in the names which have been given their children. Children, I learn, were fond of him, and he loved children.* It was this love of them which led him to engage in their instruction. Mr. Gurney's school, which was kept in his own house, became well known in all the region, and brought a good reputation not only to him but to the place. Students were sent him from abroad, and a desire for an education was encouraged at home. Through the influence of his school, several of the young men of the place sought a college education, and some entered upon the work of the ministry. Of these latter, I recall the names of Abel and Edward Richmond, Enoch Pratt, Jonathan Keith and Oliver Hayward. Rev. Elijah Dexter of Plympton, the father of Rev. Dr. Dexter, of the Congregationalist, studied with Mr. Gurney. Rev. Richard Briggs of Mansfield, was also his student. Mr. Gurney published an English grammar, which was considered very good for beginners. I have a copy of it in my possession, the title page reading thus:

"The Columbian Accidence, or a Brief Introduction to the English Language: attempted on a new plan, for the use of children. With an appendix, containing a list of irregular Nouns and Verbs, observations on Punctuation, Rules for the use of Capitals, observations on forming Derived Words, and Examples of Parsing.

By David Gurney, A. M.
Published according to Act of Congress.
Boston:
Manning & Loring, Printers.
1801."

Rev. Enoch Sanford of Raynham says, concerning this grammar, "It was quite popular. It seemed well suited for beginners in studying the English language. I studied

*One of our aged men, Dea. Perkins, says he remembers the bow with which Mr. Gurney met the children, taking his hat entirely off.

it, and my father, a teacher for thirty years, always used it and liked it. One peculiarity in it was, every word was parsed by itself—no joining of a verb with its auxiliary or a participle." Mr. Sanford also says of Mr. Gurney, he "was a man of great industry and firmness." He attributes his teaching to the necessity of the case, to aid in the matter of support. For the same reason, he supposes, he carried on a farm. His salary was nominally the same as Mr. Reed's, sixty pounds, but the war had depreciated currency and disarranged values, so as to render such a salary very precarious. But with his farm, and school and pastor's salary, he realized a competency. In 1798, the salary is first reckoned in dollars, having till then been so many pounds, and is called $216.67 cents. This probably was beside the use of the parish land, such of it as remained unsold. In 1799, it is $206.00. In 1800, the same. In 1801, $210.00. In 1802, $215.00. In 1803, $205.00. And ever after it does not vary much till 1808, when a legacy was left the church by Mr. Nicholas Roche, a benefactor* of the church, of Scotch Irish descent, and styled in his will "a trader." His business was peddling, chiefly silk goods. He was a single man, very economical in his habits, having his home in that part of Middleborough now called Lakeville. He had no relatives in this country, and left his entire property to churches in Middleborough and elsewhere; and to other charities, of which the following inscription on his gravestone makes mention:

This monumental stone is erected in memory of Mr. Nicholas Roche, who died October the 31st, 1808, aged 85 years. He was born in the kingdom of Ireland, and came from thence to America in the days of his youth, where, by indefatigable industry, he accumulated an handsome fortune, a valuable part of which he bequeathed for the support of the gospel ministry in this and some of the adjacent congregational societies. He gave several large bequests to individuals, and the remaining part of his estate he directed his executors to distribute, according to their judgment, amongst

*For these facts I am indebted to Rev. C. W. Wood and Mr. L. Washburn, of Lakeville.

the sober, honest and industrious poor. The deceased sustained through life, an irreproachable moral character. The virtues which he practiced, and the judicious distribution which he made of his valuable property, more than any posthumous eulogium, speak his praise.

Mr. Roche left four thousand dollars to the church in Lakeville; two thousand to the first church in Taunton, known as the Westville church, and two thousand to this church. I have understood from an aged member of the church, that in the payment of this legacy there was a considerable premium above the nominal amount, which Mr. Gurney much desired should be added to the fund but it was appropriated to meet current expenses. The records do not show that after the payment of this legacy, any larger sum was voted Mr. Gurney direct from the people; it was even smaller. But it must be considered, there were additional expenses in other directions. This was the year, 1808, in which a new meetinghouse was built—the second in the history of the parish. It had a belfry and bell. There was considerable discussion about the location of it, but it was finally "Voted, that the undertakers set the new meetinghouse where they shall think proper." It was "set" about where the old one was, and was finished and accepted by the parish the 2d of January, 1809. The large pine trees on the meetinghouse lot were cut down and sold for wood. Liberty was granted in 1814 "to erect sheds on the common near the meetinghouse, under the direction of the parish committee." Affairs in the parish, during Mr. Gurney's ministry, moved on with considerable harmony. All people did not see things alike. Good people had different views then, as now. But Mr. Gurney was a wise, prudent, peaceful man. He not only studied the things which made for peace in his own parish, but he lived on good terms with his neighbors. He was always very friendly with Rev. Mr. Backus, pastor of the Baptist church. They worked happily together in 1802, when there was a good work of grace. He was friendly with Mr. Backus' successor, who came here before Mr. Backus died, and was a different sort of a man. I have heard a somewhat amusing story of a prayer meeting

which these three ministers held in the field by the side of the stream,* which runs near Mr. Backus' house. It was called by Mr. Backus' colleague, and he, somewhat fiery and excited, did not seem to Mr. Gurney, who was a sincere, plain man, to be in a very suitable condition to pray. Mr. Backus offered prayer, in which Mr. Gurney heartily joined, but for some cause, Mr. Gurney did not deem it best to follow. The young man, it was said by some one who was near enough to be a witness of the scene, after much loud talk, very threateningly took hold of Mr. Gurney's collar, as if to make him pray. The result was what you might expect from a man of Mr. Gurney's character. He was still more firmly convinced that the young man was in no suitable frame of mind for acceptable prayer, and absolutely refused to pray under such circumstances. Mr. Gurney was kind and yielding on suitable occasions, but very firm and decided as well. He was an honest, truthful, plain-spoken man, as I understand—not sparing transgressors. Even on funeral occasions, he has been known to hold up the character of the wicked lying dead, as something to be shunned. He was opposed to the war of 1812. And when many ministers were preaching war sermons, he took for his text, Jeremiah IV: 19—"My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war." Mr. Gurney had been familiar with the horrors of war. He had served eight years in the war of the Revolution, and he had no wish to see the scenes of the battlefield repeated for any such slight cause as led to the last war with England. He is represented by those who remember him, as of a benevolent, sympathetic nature, ready to alleviate distress; and yet he had not what might be called an emotional nature. He was not given to tears, nor to loud merriment. He did not run to extremes in either direction, but was rather of an even,

*Another locates it in Mr. Backus' house, but it does not materially affect the story.

uniform, placid, pleasant temperament,—never very much elated, or, on the contrary, much cast down. He was regarded as a scholarly, studious, learned man. At one time he was a candidate for some vacant professorship at Cambridge, showing that he was well esteemed by his alma mater. His sermonizing was good, and sometimes a theme would so expand before him as to extend to many sermons. For example, he preached ten sermons from the text: Ex. II: 9,—"Take this child away and nurse it for me and I will give thee thy wages." It is not known that he ever printed more than one sermon; and this was preached at the ordination of Rev. Edward Richmond, colleague pastor with Rev. Jedediah Adams, in the second church, Stoughton, Mass., Dec. 5, 1792. With it, are printed the charge to the pastor by Dr. Fobes of Raynham, and the fellowship of the churches by Rev. Philip Curtis of Sharon. Printed by Thos. & John Fleet, Boston. The text of the sermon is in Matt. II.: 9th and 10th verses.

The great domestic affliction of Mr. Gurney's life was the loss of their first and only child, whose body rests by the side of its parents in our village cemetery,—"a daughter, born ye 12th, died ye 14th of March, 1805, Æt 36 hours." With difficulty, I deciphered the inscription below:

"O, cruel death!
Thy unrelenting power,
In early bloom,
Hath crop't this flower."

Fond of children, Mr. and Mrs. Gurney virtually adopted, although perhaps not in form, a nephew, Daniel Gurney. He came to them when about five years old. He married Hannah, daughter of Timothy Keith. Their children were David, Jonathan, Henry, Jane and Hannah. The daughters died early. Jonathan and Henry are also dead. The widow of Henry lives within the limits of this parish in Bridgewater, having two sons. David lives in Brockton, having a wife and two daughters. Rev. David Gurney died the 30th of July, 1815, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and the twenty-eighth year of his ministry. Dr. Reed of Bridgewater was expected to preach the sermon on the occasion

of his funeral, but was unable to be present, and his place was supplied by Rev. Dr. Flint of East Bridgewater, who took for his text, Ecclesiastes VI: 4. "For he cometh in with vanity and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness." Dr. Reed supplied the pulpit the next sabbath, and selected for his text, "Proverbs X: 7. The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot." Said one who heard both sermons, concerning their texts, particularly the last clause in each, "his name shall be covered with darkness" and "the name of the wicked shall rot," that she was reminded of the reply the Bench of Bishops in the English Church made to the reading of a sermon preached by a rector on the occasion of the decease of Princess Charlotte, I think it was, from the text, "Go, see now this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter," and who was arraigned before them for trial, "the sermon," said they, "is well enough but the text is what we object to." So these sermons, as she remembers them, were good, and expressed in fitting terms, the character of Mr. Gurney, but the texts, in part, seemed rather inappropriate. The inscription on the stone, which marks the spot where rests the body of Mr. Gurney, probably expresses the truth concerning him:

"He was much lamented by his relations, his church and his people. As a divine he was sound in the faith, judicious and edifying as a preacher, kind, peaceable and exemplary as a man, affectionate and tender as a husband, charitable to all, of every persuasion, who discovered a pious disposition. He was willing to live yet not afraid to die, leaving a character long to be remembered and his many virtues long to be followed."

Twenty-seven years longer, nearly, did his widow, Mrs. Jane Gurney, live, spending some of her time in her native town of Abington, but making this her home. At length in her eighty-fifth year, Jan. 2, 1842, she died and was buried by the side of her husband. Some friend inscribed beneath her name and age:

> "Though sad winds wail in the cypress bough,
> She is resting untroubled and calmly now;
> With a seal of sleep on her folded eye,
> While her spirit is glad in the courts on high."

I have been kindly furnished, through Mr. Zebulon Pratt, with a file of newspapers, the "Weekly Messenger," published in Boston, during the years 1814–15, belonging to Rev. Mr. Walker of Bridgewater. In the issue for Friday, Sept. 1, 1815, I find the following:

"Died, in Middleborough, on the Lord's day, July 30th, the Rev. David Gurney, Pastor of the 3d Church and Congregational Society in that town, in the 56th year* of his age, and 28th of his ministry. The following obituary notice of the deceased, has been handed us for publication:

This great and good man, whose death is so deeply and justly lamented, was very remarkable for his extraordinary meekness and humility. He wrote but little for the press. He was not ambitious of fame as an author, nor desirous of being known abroad by means of frequent and remote excursions. His acquaintance lived and his services were performed principally within the limits of his own parish and in neighboring towns. Here he uniformly appeared a "burning and shining light." As an instructor, he was prudent and faithful; as a christian, unblamable, and exemplary in his behaviour. He taught as he believed and practiced as he taught. In his sentiments, which he adopted with impartial and cautious deliberation, he was consistent and firmly established, but not blindly rigid and bigoted. His mind was large and liberal, candid and charitable, and constantly open to rational convictions. Blessed with a temper that was naturally and habitually mild and dispassionate, an inquisitive and considerate disposition, a clear and distinguishing perception, cultivated and improved by study and accurate scholarship, he was happily qualified to examine, and investigate the most abstruse subjects — to understand correctly and explain and inculcate the important doctrines and duties of religion and morality. In scriptural knowledge and criticism he excelled, and often exhibited lessons of very useful instruction. As a husband and in the other relations of domestic life which he sustained, he was always affectionate and kind, and always behaved with propriety. In his social intercourse and conversation generally, he was familiar, entertaining and instructive,— sometimes facetious, but never violated the strictest rules of decorum — "temperate in all things." His last illness, which was long and distressing, he endured with uncommon patience and resignation to the will of heaven. In the near prospect of dissolution, his expecta-

*57th year of his age, according to the inscription on his gravestone.

tion of future happiness was that of an humble believer in the Gospel of Christ. Conscious of his own imperfections, and at the same time of his sincerity, he renounced every plea of personal merit, hoping and trusting in the Goodness and Mercy of God, through the mediation of His Son for pardon, acceptance and eternal salvation."

DISCOURSE IV.

PREACHED JULY 18th, 1875.

The Lord, our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. Let Him not leave us, nor forsake us.—1ST KINGS VIII: 57.

Well may Solomon have felt the need and the blessing of the divine presence and protection, in behalf of himself and people as he was assuming the responsibilities of the government, which David, his father, had transmitted, and as he was dedicating the temple which had been built according to the direction of this father. Very earnest and appropriate are the words of the prayer of dedication and of appeal to the people. In giving the history of this church, we are coming down to a period familiar to some of you, within the remembrance of many; and you know it to be a period marked with manifest tokens of the divine presence and favor. How fitting, that at our entrance on our work of investigation and study, we should from the heart, cry as did King Solomon, when he acted priest as well as king before "all the congregation of Israel," "The Lord, our God be with us as He was with our fathers. Let Him not leave us nor forsake us." After the decease of Rev. Mr. Gurney, a committee of supply for the pulpit was appointed, consisting of Calvin Pratt, Daniel Crane and

Solomon Keith. How many different ministers were heard, we know not, but of these Mr. Raymond was one, and Mr. Philip Colby was another. Mr. Colby was invited to become pastor, by the church, October 16th, and by a concurring vote of the parish November 5th, 1816, his salary to be five hundred dollars a year. They were not quite certain the people would want him to remain his lifetime, and that he would be satisfied with his new home, so they introduced a saving clause, which was a novelty in the history of the parish, "reserving the right and privilege of annulling said contract whenever two-thirds of the precinct shall be dissatisfied with his labors, by giving him one year's previous notice of the same, reserving to him the right of leaving them whenever it shall be his pleasure so to do, by giving them the same notice." It is something to be grateful for to-day, that it was never the "pleasure" of Rev. Mr. Colby, nor the wish of "two-thirds of the precinct" that the contract should be annulled — and that we enter on the history of the third pastor of this church who closed his days among the people of his pastoral love and labor. The ordination was appointed for Wednesday, the first day of January, 1817. In Hill's Meteorological Record for this region that day, I find it was "pleasant and warm. The wind S. W. — no frost in the ground." On that day, this church received Mr. Colby into membership from the church of Christ, in Hallowell, Me., under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. Gillett. The same day an ecclesiastical council, regularly called, ordained and installed Rev. Mr. Colby as pastor and teacher of this people, with the following services: Introductory prayer by Rev. Mr. Pratt of Barnstable; sermon by Rev. Dr. Worcester of Salem; consecrating prayer by Rev. Dr. Sanger of Bridgewater; charge to the candidate by Rev. Dr. Reed of Bridgewater; fellowship of the churches by Rev. Mr. Paine of Middleborough; charge to the church and society by Rev. Mr. Bates of Dedham; concluding prayer by Rev. Mr. Pomroy of Randolph. There is a singular item in the bill of accounts for expenses of *ordina-

*The widow of Dr. Robinson, whose family, their nearest neighbors, were greatly attached to Mr. Colby and his family, tells me that she remem-

tion which sounds strangely to us of to-day, and proves the unwisdom as Solomon says, of inquiring if "the former days be better than these?" Voted, "to allow for spirits for ordination, $8.90, and again for spirits, $2.39, and yet again next year "for spirits not bro't into former bill, $2.50," a grand sum total of $13.79. About this time, too, parish land was sold, and there was allowed "for spirits used in venduing precinct land, $2.51." These must have been days of ignorance touching the evils of intemperance. We have certainly learned something as to the best way of reducing expenses in the matter of ordination and the "venduing" of land. It was in the year 1817, March 25th, that "certain individuals" are referred to, "who have agreed to build a house for the use of the minister," and to them is leased "for the term of nine hundred and ninety-nine years the half acre of land, being the north-west corner of the parish lot, opposite the meetinghouse." This was the beginning of what is now known as the parsonage.* But before we enter upon the account of the ministry of him, who is to be the first occupant of the parsonage, and who has already been ordained the pastor and teacher of this people, we will inquire into his early history, and the call which he had from God to the work of the ministry. Rev. Philip Colby † was born in Sanbornton, N. H., the 30th of July, 1779. The name of his father was Isaac Colby, a farmer of great industry and strong mind, strict integrity, sterling common sense. The maiden name of his mother was Phebe Hunt, daughter of Philip Hunt of Newburyport, Mass., very domestic in her habits, and of a very tender, loving heart.

bers distinctly the day of ordination, and that additional to the excitement of ordination, was the extraordinary appearance of a whale in the "great Taunton river," which attracted crowds of people to the river-bank.

*This House, before it was owned by the parish, was held in shares, the most of which were bought up by Mr. Zebulon Pratt, and by him very generously at a low figure, sold to the society. It is in an excellent state of preservation, and is one of the best parsonages in the State, as we who live in it, have a right to affirm.

†See a sermon preached at his funeral, by Rev. Dr. Huntington of North Bridgewater.

Mr. Colby was one of nine children. In the year 1800 he went to Portland, Me., as a merchant's clerk, and afterward established himself in mercantile pursuits in Hallowell, Me., which he followed for eight years. Six of these years he had been married to his first wife, Miss Harriet Sewall, daughter of Mr. Thomas Sewall of Vassalboro', Me. They were married the 28th of June, 1804. They had two children. On the 24th of October, 1810, the eldest, a lovely boy of five years, died.* In the February of the following year, the 28th, 1811, the mother† also died. Thus it was, the husband and father was led to Christ. In the mother's sick room, in the month of July, 1810, the parents were both admitted to Rev. Mr. Gillett's church, in Hallowell, and their children were consecrated to the Lord in baptism. When his family was reduced to himself and one‡ motherless child, he closed up his business, came to Salem, Mass., and spent nearly four years in studying with Rev. Dr. Worcester, pastor of the Tabernacle church and corresponding secretary of the American Board of Missions. This course of study additional to his academic course in Gilmanton, N. H., and supplemented by a large acquaintance with men and things in a long mercantile life, above all, aided and

*He is described in a letter just received from Miss Caroline Colby, daughter of Judge Colby, as "a very remarkable boy." His name was Hamilton Van Rensalaer.

†Of this mother, the grand-daughter, Caroline Colby, writes: "A woman of very fine and most lovely character." She also adds: "These, the mother and son, are buried side by side at Augusta, Maine."

‡Afterward Judge Colby of New Bedford. The daughter Caroline writes: "He died Feb. 22, 1853, and is buried in New Bedford. Four children, three daughters and a son, survived him, the latter being the youngest child and now an officer in the U. S. Navy, at present attached to the S. S. Tennessee, on her way to China. I have the honor and privilege of being the eldest of the family, and my mother has all her daughters with her except the beloved sister next to myself, who died ten years since, leaving a daughter, the only grand-child, as none of the others have ever married." "It was pleasant," writes the grand-daughter already referred to, "to receive a letter bearing the old familiar heading of North Middleborough, a name and place associated with some of the very happiest days of my life, and going to 'Titicut' to visit our grand-parents was all through our childhood and girlhood, one of the greatest pleasures, both of my sister and self—a home now enshrined among the dearest and brightest of life's memories. A most cordial and generous hospitality was always dispensed by my grand-parents, and no one ever visited them but delighted to go again." And of the last Mrs. Colby, not her father's own mother, she again speaks, as "the good, kind grandmother we all dearly loved."

made available by the teachings of the Spirit and the grace of God, made him now, a man of six and thirty years, to be "a workman, that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," aye, "to behave himself as he ought, in the house of God." That he was held in high estimation as a man in Maine, before he left to study for the ministry, appears from the fact, that in 1806, he received a commission as justice of peace from Gov. Strong, of Massachusetts, (Maine being then a part of this State), and he was also elected the same year, one of the three selectmen and assessors of the town, and school agent, being at the time but twenty-seven years of age. On completing his studies with Dr. Worcester he engaged for six months as travelling missionary of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society in Maine. He declined several calls to locate and settle before he accepted of the call to North Middleborough. It was certainly fortunate for this church that they were able to secure such a minister, a man of rare wisdom and ministerial qualifications. Owing to his age, when brought to Christ, he was debarred from the privilege of a full collegiate course, but his attainments were such, that Brown University, the same year that he was ordained, conferred upon him the honorary degree of Master of Arts, thereby also conferring honor on herself. The pastorate of Mr. Colby in this place is memorable as giving birth to the sabbath school institution. The first summer of Mr. Colby's settlement, that is the summer of 1817, as I learn from some of the older members of the church, there was a meeting for children to recite verses from the Bible on Saturday afternoon. There were no classes formed, and it could not properly have been called a sabbath school, as it was held on Saturday. The pastor took charge of the service. But in the summer of 1818, it was transferred to the sabbath, immediately after the morning service, as now, and took the form of a sabbath school. Classes were organized and Mr. Bela Kingman was the first superintendent. Mr. Zephaniah Fobes succeeded him. I am sorry that I have not a complete list of the officers of the school and the time they

served, but unfortunately no records were kept till 1859, and we have no certain knowledge of these things. The school was suspended during the winter months, as there were no stoves in the meetinghouse. The first notice of a stove, in the records of the parish, is in 1828, the 10th of March, "Voted, to accept of a stove * and pipe and support it, provided it shall be procured at individual expense. Voted, to choose a committee of three to set it up. Voted, that the stove stand in the porch." Probably this was the time the sabbath school began to continue through the winter months. It was not considered essential, in those days, that the teachers or even the superintendent should be connected with the church. And one who was a teacher but not a professor of religion at the time, has told me, how when good Dea. David Keith, for a long time superintendent, and a most excellent one, requested all the teachers to observe a certain hour of the week as a concert of prayer for their classes, his own mind was very much exercised on the subject. How could he pray for his class, when he had never prayed aright for himself? But he did not quite dare to neglect; and so he would go away into the woods, out of sight and hearing, and try to pray. He thinks this, with other influences, brought him to Christ. The sabbath school has two record books, which were commenced in 1859. The secretaries have been Jared F. Alden from 1859 to 1862; Wales Hayward from 1862 to 1866; Daniel E. White from 1866 to 1867; N. Williams Keith from 1867 to 1871; and Wales Hayward, the second time, from 1871 till now. The records have been faithfully and ably kept. From these it appears that your superintendents since 1859 have been, Dea. Holden W. Keith,† and Rev. E. G. Little, one year; Zebulon Pratt, six years; Dea. Solomon White, three years; Dea.

*I understand that this stove was given by Gen. Leach of Easton, and that Messrs. Nahum Keith and E. E. Perkins went to Boston after it and set it up. A second stove was given by Mr. Albert Pratt of this place, of his own manufacture.

†In addition to the statement of the records, I learn that Dea. Holden W. Keith served as superintendent seven years, and at the close of his term of office, received the present of a large quarto bible from the school. Sim-

Wales Hayward,* one year; and N. Williams Keith from 1871 till now. The attendance in such a stationary population as this could not be expected to vary much in a long course of years. From the classes of the sabbath school have come the principal accessions to the church. Of the seasons of special religious interest, I shall speak hereafter. The records of this parish or precinct are, fortunately, preserved, and have been faithfully kept from the beginning. As the credit of this is due to the parish clerks, I propose giving you their names from the first, in the order in which they were appointed: Amos Keith leads the list in 1743, old style, and re-elected every year until 1749, when James Keith was chosen, who was followed in 1754 by Daniel Keith, who again in 1755, gave place to James Keith, serving a second time. He was followed in 1757, by Joshua White, who served till 1775, eighteen years! Then was chosen Abner Kingman, who served from 1775 to 1793, another eighteen years! He was followed by Solomon Keith, who served till 1798, five years. Avery Fobes, Daniel White, Daniel Crane, Charles Hooper, Samuel Dunbar, Jr., Luke Reed, Jonathan C. Keith, followed for shorter periods, when in 1817, Bela Kingman was chosen, who retained the office till 1826, nine years, succeeded by Geo. W. Pratt, who continued in office till 1837, eleven years. Solomon White was then chosen, who served till 1855, eighteen years, when his son, Solomon White, was chosen, who still retains the office, twenty years.

The office of treasurer in a parish is attended with responsibility and perplexity. The position is laborious, and those who have served in that capacity should be gratefully remembered. The list is led by Nehemiah Wash-

ilar donations were made Bro. Williams Keith and Dea. Hayward last year. Dea Keith was preceded as superintendent by Bro. Ebenezer Shaw. I learn that Dea. David Keith and Solomon White, senior, served also as superintendents, beside Mr. Kingman and Mr. Fobes. There may have been others.

*Dea. Hayward has also led the singing in the sabbath school since 1871, following in that position Mr. Charles E. Alden, who was the first to be appointed to that work regularly and who faithfully taught the children from 1862 to 1871—nine years.

burn in 1743, who also acted as moderator at the first precinct meeting, held at his house, in Bridgewater, for organization. He served but one year, and was followed by Joshua Fobes, Thomas Knowlton, Samuel Keith, Amos Keith, Ephraim Keith, David Alden, Jr., Abieser Edson, Jabez Eaton, Daniel Leach, Daniel Keith, Wm. Fobes, whose term of office was brief, but Job Alden served from 1766 to 1770, and again from 1779 to 1788, and again from 1797 to 1799, fifteen years. He was followed by Solomon Keith, Daniel Leach again, Zephaniah Shaw, David Richmond, Solomon Keith, Jeremiah Keith, Wm. Pratt, Job Alden, again, either the father or his son, Charles Hooper, Daniel Crane, Luke Reed, Calvin Pratt, Greenleaf Pratt, Jonathan C. Keith, Wm. Pratt again, Dr. Morrill Robinson, Elijah E. Perkins, when in 1835 Solomon White was chosen, who held the office till 1855, or twenty years, when his son, Solomon White, succeeded him, who still retains the office, twenty years. Much of the financial credit of the parish, and promptness in fulfilling its engagements are due to the fidelity and painstaking of the treasurer. The question has been once and again agitated in the precinct, of being set off from Middleborough and Bridgewater as a distinct town — first in 1743, when the precinct was established, again in 1792, and the third time in 1821. It may have been agitated since, but as yet without success.

When the parsonage was made ready, the minister, Rev. Mr. Colby, was ready to occupy it, with his second wife, Maria Otis of Barnstable, daughter of Gen. Joseph Otis, and niece of James Otis, of Revolutionary memory, to whom he was married the 1st of January, 1818. Mr. Colby had already named a son of his first wife Harrison Gray Otis, after a friend whom he much respected, in Boston. This son, assisted to an education by his mother's brother, Dr. Sewall of Washington, became a distinguished member of the Bristol county Bar, married a daughter of John Avery Parker of New Bedford, and was promoted to the Bench. His wife still survives him as Mrs. Dr. Lambert of Charlestown. The second Mrs. Colby lived about three

years, having deceased in 1821, 20th of May, and is buried with her only child, Wm. Otis Colby, who died in infancy, July 17th, 1820, in Barnstable. The third Mrs. Colby was Eliza S. Standish of New Bedford, an own cousin of his first wife, to whom he was married the 8th of January, 1824, who survived her husband and lies buried by his side in the neighboring cemetery. Two of their little children sleep with them, Alexander Hamilton, who died Sept. 11, 1826, aged one year and eleven months; and Philip H., who died July 11, 1831, aged three weeks. On their stones, parental love inscribed, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," and "Suffer little children to come unto Me." Harriet reached adult age and married Mr. Warren Wheeler of West Roxbury, but she is now dead, leaving three children. During the four and thirty years of Mr. Colby's pastorate, the church was invited by pastor and delegate to sit in council thirty eight times; once to consult about the division of a church, four times to assist in organizing a church, on eight occasions to consider and assist in healing church difficulties — to consult, and if thought best, assist in dismissing eight ministers, also in ordaining and installing seventeen. Mr. Colby has recorded one hundred and fifty nine marriages as solemnized by him. Also, four hundred and four deaths in his parish, making an average of about four marriages and twelve deaths each year of his ministry. In 1818 Dea. Elijah Eaton, one of the two deacons, Dea. Isaac Wilbur being the other, having become aged and infirm, requested another to be chosen, to occasionally act in his place. "On calling for the votes, Bro. Oliver Keith had a majority and was chosen." In 1823, Bro. Keith "having removed out of the parish and been dismissed from the church, Bro. Job Alden, Jr., was chosen in his place." In 1827, by request of Dea. Wilbur, a deacon was chosen to relieve him, on account of the infirmities of age. Bro. Azel Perkins was first chosen but declined, after which Bro. David Keith was chosen and accepted. In 1850, Sept. 20th, Bro. Elijah E. Perkins was chosen deacon. Nov. 1st of the same year, Bro. Holden W. Keith was

chosen, and both these brethren remain in office. In 1828, the church voted, on the recommendation of the pastor, to unite with the other churches of the Taunton and vicinity association, in a conference of churches, and delegates have been appointed ever since to represent the church in conference meetings. The discipline of the church appears to have been faithfully but kindly administered in Mr. Colby's time, eventuating in the recovery and saving to the church, of all but four, who, after due efforts to reclaim, were excluded. The recorded dismissions from the church during Mr. Colby's pastorate, are forty. The baptism of infants is singularly small, indicating an almost entire neglect of the ordinance, in its application to the children of believers. I find only sixteen recorded — and of these, three were the pastor's own children — and baptized by Rev. Enoch Pratt. Of the remaining thirteen, seven were in one family, and two in each of three other families — so that four families only beside the pastor's, appear to have practiced the ordinance during the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Colby, according to the records. We come now to the admissions to the church by profession and by letter. The pastor himself is at the head of the list, received by letter from the church of Christ, in Hallowell, Me., under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. Gillett, and during the thirty-four years of his ministry, it was his privilege to receive to the church, including himself, one hundred and seventy-eight members — principally by profession, and the larger part, as the fruit of seasons of special religious interest. These seasons are readily found on the records, in the multiplied accessions to the church. The first occurred in 1824, during which year thirty-nine were received to the church. The second was in 1831, the year of a great awakening through all the land, in which year seventy-one united with the church, and of these fifty-four at one time, the 16th of October. There was an accession of seven in 1842, of eleven in 1843, and of nine in 1850; subtracting these accessions during five years, one hundred and thirty-seven, from one hundred and seventy-eight, the whole number received, and there remain forty-

one for the remaining twenty-nine years. Alas! that so many should wait for such a revival season, which may never come in their lifetime, when it is written: "Behold now is the accepted time—behold, now is the day of salvation." There were seasons of sad decline, when everything languished. How difficult it was to meet the expenses of the parish! The people were almost ready to charge the minister with the blame, and make him the scapegoat for their sins. But when minister and people sought unto the Lord and laid all their sins on Jesus, and scores were brought sorrowing to His feet, what a change! The records show it. It was only in February, 1831, that a committee was appointed to confer with Mr. Colby about less salary, and this when only three hundred dollars were raised by tax, relying on the fund for the rest.* But after the revival, you hear no more of this, rather you hear of an additional sum raised for the minister, and the same year, 1832, it was voted to renovate, repair and paint the old meetinghouse, to put in an additional number of stoves, and warm up, not only the entry, but the whole house, to build sheds, remembering that the "merciful man is merciful to his beast," and to lower the pulpit so as to bring the minister nearer to the people. Indeed, after the revival, they appear to have felt equal to almost anything. It was soon after this the church procured a new service of plate for the communion table. It was after the religious awakening of 1824, that a new bell was secured, weighing nine hundred and four pounds.

The only printed sermon of Mr. Colby which I have seen, was preached at the fourteenth anniversary of the Palestine Missionary Society in 1835, in Randolph, from the text in Isaiah LXV: 8–10, in which the conversion of the

*Mr. Colby, like his predecessor, Mr. Gurney, for some years took scholars, and thus increased the means of his support. Some, who were his pupils, speak of him with great reverence and affection. He was every inch of him, a gentleman—and none, whether young or old, could ever approach him without respect and admiration for those royal qualities, which made him the man he was.

Jews and their restoration to Palestine are forcibly presented. It was one of the earliest movements of Mr. Colby, in coming to North Middleborough, to suggest the formation of a ladies' society,* to assist in the missionary work. Mrs. Colby was president. Money was raised toward the support of Messrs. Fisk and Parsons, in Palestine. The constitution declared its purpose to be, "to promote the glory of God and the good of humanity." I have secured the loan of a manuscript sermon of Mr. Colby, preached on the occasion of the death of the mother of Dea. Perkins, from the text, 2d Tim. IV: 7, 8,—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course—I have kept the faith." The sermon contains an admirable exposition of the text, and an application to the decease of a most worthy and valued member of the church of Christ in this place for thirty-three years. Mr. Colby was a writer of hymns. You may remember one which he wrote for the occasion of a parish visit at the parsonage, bearing date "Nov. 9, 1848."

"On Afric's desert sands so drear,
O'er bleak Sahara's arid soil,
With weary steps, 'mid hope and fear,
The ventr'rous travellers onward toil.

'Mid the wide waste, with eager eye,
While they their lonely way pursue.
A sweet oasis, fresh and nigh,
With lovely verdure, meets their view.

Here let them pause—the scene enjoy,
Pure waters drink, breathe fragrant air;
Remit awhile their stern employ,
Regal'd with all that's fresh and fair.

So christian pilgrims on the road
Across the world's wide moral waste.
While travelling homeward to their God,
Eager the promis'd bliss to taste,—

A verdant flowery vale descry,
Where virtue grows, and friendships bloom,
And love's pure fires, that never die,
Burn bright to dissipate the gloom.

*The Ladies' Benevolent Society, at present in existence, is not the same but similar—not limited to any one object, but ready for every good work and labor of love. It has been in existence about thirty years only. It has provided an organ for the church at a cost of thirteen hundred dollars, and now proposes re-carpeting the church. The ladies also have maintained for many years a prayer meeting, now held at private houses on Saturday evening.

Here, in this lovely vale we meet
In sacred friendship's bowers embrace,
Here hold communion pure and sweet,
As friends of God, and heirs of Grace.

Pure friendships built on love divine,
Survive the tomb and live on high,—
There ripening, grow, expand, refine,
In worlds of bliss, above the sky.

As we pursue our heavenly way,
Such may our christian friendship prove,
Till raised to realms of endless day,
Where trees of life bear fruits of love,—

There 'mid the blood-wash'd, holy throng,
In robes of white, with praise and joy,—
With victor's palms and choral song,
May we eternity employ."

I requested an intimate ministerial friend and neighbor of Mr. Colby, Rev. Enoch Sanford of Raynham, to give me his impressions concerning his ministry. They are as follows:

"He had a good capacity for self-culture, which he failed not to improve. By his good sense and pastoral habits, he soon gained the affections of the people. As a preacher, he was considered by his brethren and his hearers generally, both interesting and edifying. The style of his discourses was plain, scriptural and impressive. They possessed those excellencies, called by Cicero, 'lucidus ordo,' and by Dr. Blair, 'perspicuity.' No one, in going away from hearing him, would have to ask,—what was his subject, what did he prove, what was his application, for these were all made so plain that few would fail to know them. He was a practical preacher as well as doctrinal. He never aspired to rise into mysterious points of theology, which have been subjects of contention for centuries, and are not yet settled to the satisfaction of the learned. He aimed at teaching men the fundamental truths of the gospel, and adapting his style to their capacities. Hence he made no attempts at oratory or to show his knowledge of philosophy or literature. Divine subjects seemed to be clearly apprehended, and he had a happy faculty of clearly exhibiting them. He was judicious in his texts and in the arrangement of the parts of his discourse. While he aimed at no eloquence, he endeavored to impress upon the minds of his hearers the truths he was uttering. He used illustrations and figures of speech—but they were always dignified and comely. He never descended to the low and vulgar. All his discourses at extra meetings were without notes, and his extemporizing was easy and

familiar. In using a manuscript he was not closely confined to it, but appeared to be speaking to his audience with plainness and earnestness. If he made a gesture, he seemed unconscious of it, so absorbed was he in what he was saying. On funeral occasions, where I have often met him, he was sympathetic and comforting. Having lost near relatives, he knew how to speak words of relief. In his intercourse with men he was a perfect gentleman. He was never heard to utter anything bitter or acrimonious against any one. He had some opposers, but treated them with kindness. He was never severe in criticism on the belief of others; was liberal and tolerant toward what he deemed error. He favored and fostered the benevolent movements of the day. Rev. Mr. Colby was of a delicate constitution, of a mild and pleasant countenance, tall in stature, and of a commanding presence. He was cheerful though never boisterous in mirth. His health gradually yielded to the growing infirmities of age. He said but little about himself or what he had done. I saw him a few days before he died; his strength was small but his mind calm, his thoughts clear, and his trust in the divine promises unshaken. I observed to him, that he had administered consolation to great numbers whom he had visited on the borders of eternity, and now he must take the same consolation to himself. Without hesitation he said, he could. His funeral was attended by all the ministers* in the vicinity. The sermon was preached by Rev. Daniel Huntington of North Bridgewater. The prayer offered by Rev. S. Hopkins Emery of Taunton. Over the grave remarks were made, closing with these words:

> "Servant of God, well done,—
> Rest from thy loved employ;
> The battle fought, the victory won,
> Enter thy Master's joy."

Rev. Mr. Huntington, in addressing the people on the day of their pastor's funeral, said: "Brethren and friends, you know, for you have many evidences, that a prophet hath been among you. Some of you can tell when the word of truth, which he dispensed, first reached your hearts and conveyed thither a savor of life unto life, and all of you have in remembrance many precious testimonials of the sincerity and constancy of his devotions to your spiritual welfare;

*I find them named, in part at least, in the records: "Rev. Messrs. Putnam, Thatcher and Bragg, of Middleborough; Gay, Raymond, Huntington and Brigham, of Bridgewater; Maltby and Emery of Taunton; Sanford, Carver and Hall, of Raynham."

as your spiritual father, he has here fed you with knowledge and understanding, and nourished you up in the words of faith and good doctrine." And he closed with a solemn appeal to such as had failed to be savingly blessed by the ministrations of the faithful departed pastor. Rev. Dr. Davis, of Westfield, says of Mr. Colby: "In his feelings and habits, kind and affable, possessing a well-balanced mind. Endowed with a large share of common sense, a good preacher, a faithful minister — greatly beloved by his people." In your garden of graves, at its very entrance, near Backus, Reed and Gurney, may be seen the stone of a fourth, on which is inscribed as follows:

Erected by Z. Pratt, 1853.

Rev. Philip Colby,

who died Feb. 27, 1851, in his 72d year. During thirty-four years the esteemed and useful Pastor of the Congregational Church, enjoying the full confidence and affection of his people to the last. He was affable and kind, cherishing self-respect without ostentation or moroseness — combining dignity with simplicity of character, firmness with urbanity. He loved his people for their sake and for Christ's sake. His piety sustained him to the last. His precepts and example will ever live in sweet remembrance, and though dead, through them, he speaketh still.

Filial love has placed by its side another stone, on which we find inscribed the following:

My Mother,

Eliza S., wife of Rev. Philip Colby, born Feb. 2, 1802; died Nov. 16, 1858.

Thus the husband and the last wife, with their two little ones, rest together, awaiting the morning of the resurrection. And since they all laid themselves down to their long sleep, the only remaining daughter, Harriet, a young wife and mother, has been summoned home,—and though their bodies rest in hope, their spirits have already awaked and put on the likeness of their Lord, and so are forever with each other and with Him, their risen Redeemer.

I have said Mr. Colby was a writer of hymns. A hymn was found on his study table, after his decease, which was

printed and sung at his funeral. It is founded on the words of our Saviour, recorded in Luke XXIII: 28 — when "there followed Him a great company of people and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him." , "But Jesus turning unto them, said, daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." The last two verses of the hymn are as follows:

"So spake the Saviour, and so may the dying,
Who dies in the Lord, from guilt's agony free.
Say, as in death's cold embrace he is lying,
Daughters of Israel, weep not for me.

Weep for yourselves, in corruption remaining,
Weep for the conflict, for fierce it must be;
I go where Christ and His people are reigning,
Daughters of Zion here, weep not for me."

DISCOURSES

V. AND VI.

PREACHED AUGUST 1st, 1875.

I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.—Ps. LXXVII: 5.

Some ridicule those who become interested in old things, and deeply absorbed in the affairs of "ancient times." And it has come to be regarded as an almost sure sign of failing intellect, at least of one's dotage, if instead of being alive to passing events, he live in the past, and among a remote ancestry. But why need this be—that a familiarity with what has gone before should beget a distaste for the duty and business of the present hour? Certainly this were a result of our researches to be deplored. I hope you are not quite weary of accompanying me through the annals of this ancient church. We have come down to the year 1851, when Rev. Mr. Colby died, full of years and full of honors, coming down to the grave, as Job hath it, "in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season." It was a new experience with this people to be without a pastor. For more than thirty years the same man had ministered among you, in holy things, your spiritual guide and teacher.

According to ministerial usage, the pastors of the Association supplied your pulpit for a time, for the benefit of the pastor's family. After this, among others, Rev. Mr. Hyde preached, who was regarded with favor. But you at length, in November, 1851, gave Thomas Eliakim Bliss a call to become your pastor. A letter just received from him gives an interesting account of his genealogy:

"I bear the ancestral name of my father and grandfather, and great-grandfather and his father—'Thomas Bliss,' as far back certainly as 1636, an old English, Puritan, Commonwealth family. My middle name I take from my mother's father, Eliakim Phelps, and from her brother, Rev. Eliakim Phelps, D. D., the father of Prof. Phelps, of Andover Theological Seminary. My father, Thomas Bliss, was born, reared, lived and died, in Brimfield, Hampshire County, Mass. My mother, Asenath Phelps, was born and reared in Belchertown, of the same County and State. I was born in Brimfield, on the 25th of November, 1824, was the youngest of a family of seven children, was reared a farmer until seventeen years of age. An older brother dying, left me, at the age of eighteen, an only son, with the expectation of following this calling all my life. But my father dying very suddenly in his chair, without a will, left me more free to choose my calling than I otherwise would have been. Wishing a better education, the farm was rented for a year, with the expectation that I should return to it at the expiration of that time. But 'man proposes, God disposes.' I first took up only the higher English branches, hardly having a thought of a collegiate education. But at the suggestion of my uncle, I concluded to take up Latin with my other studies, and so, step by step, I was led along. When the year came round, the farm was sold, and I kept on with my studies. I fitted for college at Monson academy, and graduated at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y., in 1848. During most of my course of study, I was fitting myself for the profession of law, and during my last year in college, took up law as an extra study, preparatory to entering the office of the late Chief-Justice Allen of Worcester, Mass., with whom I had already made an arrangement to this end. But again is it seen to be true, that a man 'deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.' While teaching school in Leominster, Mass., in February, 1848, my mind was deeply exercised with religious subjects, and then it was, I trust, that the great change took place, which was followed so naturally with the choice of my present profession, and with the great desire to preach Christ Jesus, the Saviour of lost sin-

ners. For some years previous I had been somewhat sceptical in my views, and argued much against divine things. I tried very hard to believe in Universalism, &c. I wrestled against the sovereignty of God, and everything of that character, and often 'charged God foolishly.' But God, 'who is rich in mercy,' &c.,—you know the rest. I will only say here, that since that beautiful morning in February, 1848, when in words audible to myself and my God, I gave over the conflict, I have never had any serious difficulty on these questions. They were then settled by a full surrender, and the burden, which then rolled off, has never returned! In the autumn of 1848, I entered Andover Seminary, and completed my course there in 1851. How I was led to settle in North Middleborough, Dea. Perkins can tell you fully, and how he applied the same rule on Andover Hill that Eliezer, Abraham's servant, did in finding a wife for Isaac."

The answer Laban and Bethuel made to Abraham's servant was, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord." The answer of Mr. Bliss to the messenger of this church on Andover Hill was not otherwise. For his support, were pledged seven hundred dollars. A contract of settlement was drawn up and signed on both sides. The day of ordination was appointed, the third of March, 1852. Letters missive were sent out inviting the neighboring churches to be represented at that time. But on Sabbath morning, Feb. 28th, the church edifice was burned, and the ordination necessarily was deferred. The Baptist church kindly invited this people, deprived of their house of worship, to meet with them, the pastor-elect, Rev. Mr. Bliss, occupying the pulpit half of the time. This invitation was accepted and the arrangement was very satisfactory on both sides. At length, the 2d of June, 1852, this, the third church building which has stood on this site, was so far completed as to warrant the ordination services. Eleven churches were represented in the council called. The sermon was preached by Rev, Jonathan Crane of Attleborough, whose sister Rev. Mr. Bliss afterward married. A letter just received from Mr. Bliss, supplementary to the first, thus refers to his domestic relations: "On the 16th of June, 1852, I was married at Schenectady, N. Y., to Miss Lucinda Hamilton Crane,

daughter of Jonathan Crane * of that city. On the 2d May, 1854, was born to us in the parsonage, at North Middleborough, Catharine Crane Bliss, who was baptized Sept. 1st, 1854, by her uncle, Rev. Mr. Crane, of Attleborough." Although compared with the pastorates of his predecessors, Rev. Mr. Bliss was settled but a short time, in this parish, and his family on leaving the place, was only as represented above, the interest begotten in him by a pastorate thus brief, warrants the continuance of our narrative:

"The next year we went to Blackstone, Mass., to live, and there, July 14th, 1858, was born to us Adelia Phelps Bliss, baptized May 4th, 1859, and on May 28th, 1860, Charles Hamilton Bliss was born, baptized Sept. 2d, 1860. With the hope of saving the life of their mother, we went to reside at Hancock, Michigan, on Lake Superior, in the summer of 1862. On the 5th of January, 1863, little Charles Hamilton died of scarlet fever, and on the 7th of the same month, his little sister, Adelia, followed him of the same disease. On the 8th of July following, the mother joined them in the better land. In her last immediate sickness, resulting from hemorrhage, she had great peace and sweet assurance of hope. Among her last words were, 'I can trust my Saviour.' She was a devoted wife and mother, an intelligent and exemplary christian — a beautiful spirit. They all now sleep in Vale Cemetery, Schenectady, N. Y. Nearly two years after the death of my first wife, I was married at Memphis, Tenn., on the 31st of May, 1865, to Miss Frances Rowley, who was born in Boston, Mass., lived with her family at Philadelphia for eight years, united with Rev. Albert Barnes' church at twelve years of age, graduated at the Normal school in that city, and afterwards at Abbott Female Seminary, Andover, Mass., taught in the Female Seminary at Derry, N. H., for four years. Her children are Alice Blake Bliss, nine years old, Hattie Belle Bliss, seven years old, and Sarah Frances Bliss, five years old. Perhaps I may add that my present wife, while living in Wrentham, Mass., with her family, committed to memory, at the age of seven years, the whole of the Assembly's Catechism, and recited it perfectly to her pastor, the late Rev. Horace James, and received a Testament from him as a prize, which she still retains, and which contains, in his hand-writing, the statement of this somewhat remarkable 'feat.'

*Mr. Crane gave a handsome pulpit Bible, now used in the Lecture Room.

The pastorate of Rev. Mr. Bliss continued from the 2d of June, 1852, to the 15th of May, 1855, a little less than three years, and the settlement having been according to the "six months' notice" plan, all which the council called had to do, was to enquire if the "six months' notice" had been given on either side, and declare the pastoral relation at an end. In this case, the pastor gave the notice, for reasons which were satisfactory to him, the church and the council. Even this brief pastorate bore rich fruit. Thirty were received to the church; of these, twenty by profession. Unusual attempts were made to reclaim wandering members of the church, and the work of discipline was pressed, as some thought, too hard. Thirteen members of the church were cut off, and one restored. Letters of dismission were granted to four. No account of deaths and funerals after May, 1854. In 1853, twelve funerals were attended by the pastor, and of these, four marked as church members. The first five months of 1854, ten funerals, two of church members. There is no account of marriages. Two infant baptisms only; one of the pastor's own child. Four ecclesiastical councils were attended — one to organize a church at East Taunton,—one to dismiss a minister, and two to ordain and install. In November, 1852, the church manual was adopted and printed, which is still used by the church, drawn up with care, and containing not only the church covenant and articles of faith, with scripture proof texts, but a brief historical sketch and ecclesiastical principles and rules,— with questions for self-examination. On leaving North Middleborough, Rev. Mr. Bliss removed to Blackstone, Mass., where he remained six years. Thence, after the death of his first wife, to Memphis, Tennessee, where he remained six years, and already has he been four years in Denver, Colorado, where he is in charge of what was organized as a congregational church, but, for what seemed satisfactory reasons, changed its relations to Presbytery a few months since. Of this pastor's return to you, making you an "angel's visit," in the winter of 1873-74, you need not that I should speak to you. Many who hear me are

living witnesses to the fidelity and saving results of that brief ministry and those abundant labors of love during that rich harvest season.

I must pass to the next pastorate, which was a still briefer one, and conditioned, like the former, on "a notice," but three months instead of six months. The council convened to install Rev. Charles Packard, the pastor-elect, the 17th of October, 1855, adopted a resolution, drafted and presented, so say the minutes of council, by Rev. Dr. Storrs of Braintree, condemning that provision as an injurious innovation. Dr. Storrs preached the sermon, and other parts were assigned to ministers of the vicinity. The council called to terminate the relation that day entered into, met the 22d of October, 1857, the pastorate continuing a few days more than two years. The salary, as of his predecessor, was seven hundred dollars. During this pastorate, the church, through its pastor and delegate, assisted in dismissing two ministers, and installing one. Its pastor also attended an ex-parte council in Fitchburg, called by an aggrieved member of a church; also, with delegate, assisted in healing church difficulties in Plympton. Two infants were baptized by this pastor, in one family. Two members of the church were dismissed after Mr. Bliss left and before Mr. Packard came. One was dismissed during his ministry. Thirteen deaths are recorded in 1856, and sixteen in 1857. Four marriages. According to the records, only three were received to the church, the pastor, his wife and daughter. It was a time barren of accessions, of numerical increase, and probably the pastor, somewhat discouraged, left. But there may have been, and doubtless was, growth in other directions. Mr. Packard was an interesting and able preacher — a most genial and social christian man and gentleman. His intercourse with the people, I judge from remarks I have heard, to have been edifying and improving. It will interest you to hear what his brother, Prof. Packard of Brunswick, Me., writes concerning him:

"My brother Charles was born at Chelmsford, Mass., April 12, 1801. The family having removed in 1802 to

Wiscasset, Me., his childhood and youth were spent there. He fitted for college in Wiscasset, entered Bowdoin college September, 1813, graduated in 1817 with the Latin salutatory, taught as assistant in the academy at Portsmouth, N. H., then as assistant in Gorham academy, then in the academy at Hallowell, Me., was a private tutor in the family of Robert H. Gardiner, Esq., of Gardiner, Me.; studied law with Frederick Allen, Esq., of Gardiner, and finished his studies with Hon. Benjamin Orr of Brunswick, opened an office in Brunswick, and practiced law several years with increasing success and reputation, In 1834 he became interested in a season of revival, attained a christian hope, made a public profession of his faith, soon decided to relinquish his profession as a lawyer, and devote himself to the ministry of Christ. He studied for that purpose one year at Andover, and then removed with his family to Cincinnati, continued study in Lane Seminary one year, and was settled at Hamilton, Ohio. Through the failing health of his family, after these years' service, he was compelled to return to New England, and was settled in Lancaster, Mass., where he labored fifteen years. Then about three or four years at East Cambridge and Middleborough. His last settlement was at Biddeford, Me., where he gained, as ever before, the respect, confidence and love of his people, and as the promise of a revival of God's work was opening upon his labors, was very suddenly summoned to higher service above, Feb. 17, 1864. He married Miss Rebecca Prentiss Kent, Concord, N. H. His children are Charles W., M. D., New York, a successful physician; Rev. Edward N., Evanston, Ill., in a successful ministry; Rev. George T., an Episcopal minister, now without charge; Mary Caroline, married to Mr. Albert G. Tenney of Brunswick, Me., and Charlotte Mellen. His widow, with a daughter, resides in Brunswick, Me.

Prof. Packard alludes to the sudden death of his brother. It was on this wise, as I learned from another source. He left the house to go to the post office, and after taking a few steps, returned, as if with some presentiment of what might occur, and took an affectionate leave of his wife. It was on his way back, that seized with sudden illness, he entered a friend's house and soon expired. But he was ready. He was a good man, loving Christ and the souls of men for whom Christ died. There is one entry on the record of his ministry here which I must not omit. Some of you may remember the meeting:

"1857, March 3d, at a regular church meeting, duly notified for the purpose, the brethren and sisters present solemnly and with many tears renewed their covenant vows, the pastor reading the covenant, and the members assenting to it by rising. The pastor closed with prayer.

Attest: CHARLES PACKARD, Pastor and Clerk."

Some who renewed their covenant and repeated their vows, with the pastor on that day, are doubtless praising God with this same pastor in the sanctuary above, that such vows were ever spoken, and through God's grace assisting, remembered and kept. Others of the number may be present to-day, listening to this discourse. A solemn question is it—has that renewal of my covenant resulted in lasting good?*

The next pastorate was that of Rev. E. G. Little, who commenced his labors with this people in 1857, soon after Mr. Packard left. It was fortunate that a man was found who could so quickly enter into the ministry of the Word among you. And it was "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," as Paul writes to the Corinthians. "Jan. 1st, 1858"—The record reads: "This day set apart as a day of fasting and prayer. Manifest indications of the presence of the Holy Spirit." Again: "January and February—Witness a powerful revival of religion — christians rejoice and souls are converted by the grace of God." Again: "March 1st—Rev. E. G. Little hired for one year." The experiment of short settlements by council, and brief pastorates, had proved unsatisfactory. After a trial of one year or more,

*This double discourse here closed in the morning. Immediately after service, one of the church said to me with deep feeling: "I was present at this meeting for renewing the covenant. I remember Mr. Packard's ministry well. He was a most interesting and profitable preacher. I believe the good work of grace at the beginning of his successor's ministry had its rise in the pastorate of Mr. Packard. The seed sown then sprung up." I was glad of this testimony, and I repeated it to the people in the afternoon, adding that thus are verified the words of Jesus to His disciples, after His discourse with the woman of Samaria concerning living water—"One soweth and another reapeth, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." Doubtless these two ministers of Christ, Packard and Little, who have already entered into "the joy of their Lord" in their sowing and reaping "rejoice together" before Him, who, in permitting them to do either the one or the other, receives all the praise.

the church unanimously invited Rev. Mr. Little to remain as a permanent pastor. The date of the call was "1859, March 30." The society concurred in this and offered a salary of seven hundred dollars. On the 6th of April, Rev. Mr. Little sent in his letter of acceptance, and on the 13th of this month, he was installed as pastor, by council, Rev. Mr. Maltby, of Taunton, preaching the sermon, and other parts being sustained by neighboring pastors. The records during this pastorate, which extended from the 13th of April, 1859, to Sept. 15th, 1867 — more than eight years, and including the year and a half previous, not far from ten years,— the records of this decade of years are unfortunately very imperfect, there being absolutely nothing from 1864 to the close of the ministry—the last four years. But the record of the first five years is perhaps sufficiently bright and cheering to make amends for this lack. Hardly any other years in the history of the church present a more glorious result of faithful, persistent christian labor, than the years, 1858 and 1862. The diligent worker for the Master, who went forth weeping, was permitted to gather in the sheaves and shout the glad harvest home. The fruits of those revival seasons yet remain, "lights in the world." In the year 1858, were received into the church, thirty-two on profession and four by letter. In 1859, two were received by letter, the pastor and his wife. In 1860, one by profession, and one by letter. In 1861, two by letter. In 1862—another harvest season—received by profession, forty-three, by letter, four, and in 1866, received by profession, four, making the entire number during these five years, ninety-three, and of these all but ten in two years. The baptism of seven infants is recorded during these ten years, three of these, children of the pastor, and two others, in each of two families. Three members of the church were dismissed, according to the records. No record of deaths, funerals, marriages, councils, save the one council of installation.

It was during Rev. Mr. Little's ministry, that the Pratt Free School was incorporated and endowed. An institution which is of such promise to the place, requires special

notice. Instruction in the advanced studies of an English education, as also in the classics, had been given by the ministers of the town. Rev. Mr. Reed had students. The school of Rev. Mr. Gurney was a success. Rev. Mr. Colby gave some attention to teaching. During the ministry of Messrs. Bliss and Packard, schools were taught both at the vestry of the church, and the parsonage. Young men from Andover would teach a few weeks in the winter, among whom are remembered Hillard, McChesney, and Reed. Miss Packard, daughter of the minister, gave instruction at the parsonage. At length these attempts grew into an academy,* chartered by act of Legislature, June 6th, 1856, and a location and building were secured by means of fifty dollar shares, which proved the beginning of what is now known as the Pratt Free School. It was deemed wise, after an experiment of nine years, to abandon, if possible, the idea of tuition, and to offer free instruction to all, who, within certain limits and subject to certain conditions, might choose to attend. So the shareholders, of whom there were thirty-one, surrendered their shares to Mr. Enoch Pratt of Baltimore, who again made them over to a board of trustees, with two hundred shares of the Baltimore, Philadelphia and Wilmington Railroad, whose par value was fifty dollars, and worth sixty-eight at the time he gave them. Thus the trustees had the location, the building, and something over ten thousand dollars to start with,—and since that time, Mr. Pratt has increased the endowment to more than twenty-five thousand dollars. It has been Mr. Pratt's wish that this should not be noised abroad, but it is certainly right that the people of the place should know it.† It ought to be said that Dr. Robinson, in shares, gave fully the value of the land whereon the building stands. This was in 1865. Mr. Pratt's letter promising the

*The Principals of the academy, as they are remembered by some of the scholars, were: T. Newton Snow, Lucien D. Fay, Roland F. Alger, John Shaw, Arthur Lake, Barton F. Blake, Nathan E. Willis, and Linus A. Gould.

†Mr. Pratt also donated the clock on the church, worth five hundred dollars; a hundred dollars toward the organ, and two hundred toward the parsonage.

endowment bears date "Baltimore, January 20th, 1865," and is addressed to "Messrs. Zebulon Pratt, Doct. Morrill Robinson, Augustus Pratt, Rev. E. G. Little, N. F. C. Pratt," whom he nominated trustees. "I make this endowment," he writes, "solely for the benefit of the constant rising generation of my native place." After expressing somewhat at length his views and wishes, he thus closes: "Trusting, gentlemen, without further details, you will be able to establish and carry on this free school, and to transmit it in a flourishing condition to your successors, as time brings them forward, and with my best wishes for the success of the school, I am,

Your obedient servant, ENOCH PRATT."

The Act to incorporate the Pratt Free School was passed March 16th, 1865. It has been regularly continued under competent teachers from the autumn of that year till now. Rev. Mr. Little, as one of the trustees, was an efficient promoter of its interests, until he left, when his place was filled by the choice of Mr. Jeremiah Pratt. At the decease of Dr. Robinson, the vacancy was filled by choice of Dr. Amos B. Paun. The principals from the beginning have been, Moses C. Mitchell, Earl Ingalls, George G. Pratt, Edward H. Peabody, and H. B. Lawrence, who still holds the position.

In reply to a letter of enquiry directed to Mrs. Little, now residing in Wellesley, Mass., concerning her husband, the answer is prefaced with such a pleasant notice of the North Middleborough home, with its "halo of pleasant remembrances," as she is pleased to call them, that I must be permitted to transcribe it for you. "It was there," she writes, "nearly ten years of my life were spent, in happy family ties. Two of my children were born there, but most of all, those rooms as I recall them, seem hallowed by the many blessed meetings held in them, and the first joy of new born souls. How many earnest prayers have gone up to heaven beneath that roof, from hearts that beat no more. It seems to me a great many of those dear ones have died, but I do rejoice to hear so many are constantly coming forward to take their places." She thus continues:

"Elbridge Gerry Little, son of Joseph Little and Rebecca Webster Little was born in Hampstead, N. H. Nov. 11, 1817. Through childhood and youth he was very frail but learned readily, was a good scholar, especially in Mathematics. Commenced teaching young. Taught in Haverhill, Lynnfield, Atkinson, Newbury, Danvers, Wrentham, etc. Commenced the study of Latin with Rev. Joseph Peckham. Experienced religion in the Spring of 1838, united with the church in Hampstead, the July following, after which he decided to study for the ministry. He had private instruction by Prof. Benj. Greenleaf, Bradford; read to him Xenophon, Livy, and Horace. Entered College in the autumn of 1842, at Princeton, N. J. During his course there, he met his own expenses in part, by giving private lessons and teaching school during vacations. He graduated from Nassau in 1845, entered the Theological Seminary at Princeton from which he graduated in 1848, and was licensed to preach in April, 1848. He was ordained at Manayunk, a suburb of Philadelphia in Oct. 1848. Married to Sarah E. Coleman of Newbury, Mass. in July, 1848. Her son, Edwin C. now lives in that place. On account of the illness of his wife, who died in March, 1851, he came North, and was installed pastor in Merrimack, N. H. Sept. 1850. There he was married to his second wife, Mrs. Sarah J. Weston, who with her infant son, died and was buried in Merrimack. His labors were blessed with an almost constant revival. His next field of labor was Ashburnham, Mass., where he was settled in August, 1855, and where he was married for the third time to Lucia F. Sanderson, of Phillipston, Mass., October, 1856. Their children, Sarah Isabel, Alexander Elbridge, and Walter Sanderson, all living. Mr. Little labored in Ashburnham until his removal to North Middleborough, and on removing from North Middleborough, in 1867, made his home in Wellesley, Mass., having secular business in Boston, but preaching much, especially in New Hampshire, establishing missionary enterprises, travelling ten miles between his preaching stations, with little regard to compensation, such was his love for the work."

Rev. E. P. Marvin, an intimate friend of Mr. Little, prepared the following notice of him for the Congregationalist soon after his decease:

"Rev. E. G. Little died peacefully and in full christian hope, in Wellesley, Dec. 29, 1869. He had been troubled with some derangement of the liver for a year or so, and was taken down with neuralgia, resulting in fever. He was sick only a few weeks, and was not considered in danger until two or three days before he died. He had just completed a beau-

tiful residence; causing him much extra care and toil, which added to his daily pressing labors in the city, and his almost constant preaching on the sabbath, prostrated a constitution, which had been weakened by zealous and indefatigable labors in the place of his last pastoral settlement. The large and tearful gathering at his funeral, the full and tender address of his pastor, and the testimony given by several clergymen, who resided near him, and who had known him long and intimately, showed the sense of bereavement and sorrow felt by the community, and justified the deep and desolating grief manifested by the widow with the fatherless children. But they were sustained by the richest consolations and sweetest hopes upon every remembrance of him.

Part of his labor in Boston, after he felt constrained to leave the pastoral work, was the management of Mr. James Gray's real estate journal. In the next issue of that journal, Mr. Gray thus feelingly says: 'Our editor is gone. He who guided this paper, giving it shape and tone, has left the toils and trials of this changing life, and taken up his abode in the unchanging home of 'many mansions.' We shall sadly miss his aid and co-operation, both in connection with our paper, and in the general business office, for he had come to be a most efficient and reliable helper. But great as will be our loss in our business department, it will be far greater in our social and friendly relations. We had come to know and esteem him as a true and upright man, and as a tried and faithful friend. We are filled with sorrow, and we know all our readers and business associates will be, at this unexpected parting.' Mr. Little's ministry was marked by accuracy of scholarship, and careful investigation. He was very instructive in his sermons and in the bible class, and very genial and affectionate in conversation. He inclined to the older type of congregational theology, and was very biblical in his statements and analysis, and was often sought in council among his brethren and the churches. After fifty-two years of toil, passing through severe and repeated bereavements, he finished his course with joy, fully trusting his family to the promised care of the great shepherd, and has taken up his abode with the forever exulting redeemed."

I have the loan of three sermons in manuscript, preached in this place by Rev. Mr. Little, the first March 1, 1862, from John x : 1st and 9th verses — "Verily, verily, I say unto you he that entereth not in by the door into the sheep-fold but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved,

and shall go in and out and find pasture." The second was preached Mar. 15, 1863, from Hebrews IX : 28. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him, shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The third was preached Feb. 4th, 1866, from 1st Peter, 2: 9. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him, who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." I have not time to dwell upon the discourses but I find in them much to prove that their writer was a wise and profitable preacher of the new testament of Christ. Mrs. Little, in writing me, simply adds to her statements of the labors of her husband elsewhere, concerning his ministry here," he was not idle." These few words probably characterize that ministry well. So far from being idle, he was especially in the earlier parts of that ministry, a most indefatigable, laborious and efficient worker for the Master, the record of whose labors is on high, and on many a saved soul, yet on earth. I have already intimated that the records of the latter part of Mr. Little's ministry are wanting.* The calling of the council, which acted on his dismission, and their proceedings are not in the book of records. It is to be presumed, they were regular and that the dissolution of the pastoral relation was effected. It was during the year 1863, the latter part of August, Bro. Wales Hayward was chosen deacon, and soon after, Bro. Williams Keith, who declined and Bro. Solomon White was chosen. This I do not find on the records, but have made an entry to that effect.

* It would have been a matter of interest, if all who served their country from this parish during the war of the rebellion, beginning with the firing on Fort Sumter, the 12th of April, 1861, and ending with the surrender of Lee at Appomattox Court House, the 9th of April, 1865, had been named on the records, at least those who lost their lives. The following list of these last, is complete as I can make it:

CASWELL, IRVING W., 1st Mass. Cavalry, died of disease.
EATON, WILLIAMS, 4th Mass. Regiment, died of wounds.
HANDY, DANIEL, " " " " " disease.
HATHAWAY, LEVI, " " " " " "
HAYWARD, EDWIN, 38th " " " " "
PERKINS, CYRUS, 18th " " " " "
PERKINS, EZRA H., 33d Iowa " " " "

The first entry I find, subsequent to the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Little, is the following :

"Copy of the engagement entered into, on the part of the committee of the church and society and Rev. Henry L. Edwards, March 3, 1868. As committee of this church and society, we hold ourselves authorized to contract with Rev. H. L. Edwards to become the pastor of this church and society, with or without installation, at a salary of fifteen hundred dollars per annum, including parsonage at one hundred dollars, with three sabbaths for vacation and with the understanding that this relation commence March 3, 1868, and continue as long as it is mutually satisfactory, which engagement was accepted by all the parties."

There never was any installation but the engagement thus entered into, continued until the 30th of June, 1873, or five years and four months. I have received from Rev. Mr. Edwards, in answer to enquiries, the following :

"Born in Southampton, Mass. Jan. 24, 1822. No direct connection with Jonathan Edwards but nearly connected with Prof. B. B. Edwards, and Dr. Justin Edwards. Prof. Edwards used to say that the present Edwards family was the same just previous to the emigration from Wales. My parents' names were Luther and Rachel (Searl) Edwards. I studied at Williston Academy, Amherst College and Andover Theological Seminary. My first settlement was at South Abington, Mass, twelve years, where I found my wife, Mary (Thomas) Dyer and our children are Addie, Lizzie,* Harry Dearborn and Halley Winslow, the eldest son Harry deceased."

Rev. Mr. Edwards came here from South Abington and left in 1873, to become superintendent of public schools in Northampton, which position he still fills, being specially interested in and adapted to such a work. While pastor of this church, he was a member of the school committee of Middleborough and interested himself in the cause of education. During his ministry, there was an accurate account of the charitable collections of the society, the only one which I have been able to find from the beginning, a very unfortunate omission. I learn however from one, who knows something about it, that these collections have been gradually growing and were never

* As we aim at perfect historical accuracy in this book, it is due to the truth to state these daughters are the children of Mrs. Edwards, when the wife of Mr. Elihu Dyer of South Abington.

larger than during Mr. Edward's ministry. The annual collection for foreign missions averaged about seventy dollars, home missions, half as much, and other objects, from fifteen to thirty dollars. This is about the rate of giving since I came among you. This increase of charitable collections took place when you were paying your minister more than ever before and this was the time, when one thousand dollars were expended on the church for repairs, and a still larger sum was expended for a church organ.* Rev. Mr. Edwards recorded the names of such as were constituted life members of various benevolent societies by contributions of this church and society. The number of councils in which the church was represented by pastor and delegate, were nine, of which five were for the settlement, and four for the dismission of ministers. Only two infant baptisms are recorded, and these of the pastor's own children. The dismissions from the church recorded are six, and one excommunication. The deaths are not recorded, and the admissions to the church only in part, but by careful enquiry, the deficiency is, I think, supplied. The number of admissions by letter, twelve; the number admitted on profession, twelve. The ministry of Rev. Mr. Edwards is too recently closed among this people to require any comment from me. It is remembered by you in all its details, and better understood by those, who for these five years and more waited upon that ministry in this house, than by one who came among you only a little more than a year since, as a comparative stranger.

Of the ministry of your present acting pastor,† I do not

*It ought to be said, concerning this organ, that the maker, Mr. Stevens, pronounced it a two thousand dollar organ, sold for twelve hundred dollars. It is a very satisfactory instrument, and in the hands of the present organist, Mrs. Reed, is of great service in the songs of the sanctuary. The Ladies' Circle, of which Mrs. Otis Pratt is President, took charge of this important work, and accomplished it.

† It has since occurred to me that I need not be deterred by undue modesty from saying about myself, that born in Boxford, Mass., the 22d of August, 1815, I was baptized in Newburyport, by Rev. Samuel Spring, of whose church my mother was a member. This mother dedicated me to Christ and His ministry in my earliest infancy, and to that dedication, accepted and renewed as my own act in later life, I owe my entrance upon the work. Educated at Phillips Academy, Andover, Amherst College, Andover Theological Seminary; ordained and installed as pastor of the Spring Street, now Winslow Church, Taunton, Nov. 23, 1837, and continuing its pastor, with the

propose to speak, only to say that after a ministry about equally divided between the east and west, I engaged with you, without installation, the first of June, 1874, and we were permitted to gather in the fruits of your precious revival in the winter preceding, in the year 1874, by profession, twenty-nine and six by letter; in 1875, to this time, seven by profession, and one by letter, making a total of forty-three during this pastorate. One child has been baptized. Four have been dismissed to other churches. Six of the church have died. Your pastor has officiated on sixteen funeral occasions. He has solemnized five marriages here and elsewhere. He has attended, at your request, one council to advise concerning the dismission of a minister. This ends the official record of my ministry, and brings the history of your church down to the present time, the first of August, 1875.

I must hasten to make a few remarks, suggested by this history, what the old divines used to call "practical observations."

1st. The period covered by the history of this church, if we include the preliminary account of the Indian settlement, from the time of Winslow and Hopkins to the setting off of this parish as a distinct precinct, is two hundred and fifty-four years, or, reckoning from the organizing of the parish, in 1743, O. S., one hundred and thirty-two years. During these years, last named, nine ministers, including your present acting pastor, have served this church statedly, seven with and two without installation. Their entire time of service covers a period of one hundred, nineteen years, five months and twenty-two

exception of five years of pastorate in Bedford, Mass., until 1855, in the autumn of that year, I left Taunton for the pastorate of the First Congregational Church, Quincy, Illinois, where I remained till the beginning of 1869, when, after preaching three months to the New-England Church, Chicago, I served as acting pastor of the Richmond Street Church, Providence, R. I., for one year and a half, or until its union with the High Street Church, and for two years in the same relation to the Olivet Church, Bridgeport, Conn., until called to this charge in May, 1874. Married the 7th of March, 1838, to Julia Reed, daughter of Dea. William Reed, of Taunton; our children have been William Reed, who died when thirteen, Samuel Hopkins, Francis Wolcott Reed, and Joseph Welch. Their mother, a pupil and teacher in Ipswich Female Seminary, still lives, having shared all these years in the burdens and cares as well as privileges and blessings of a ministerial life with one, who delights in this opportunity of expressing to the world his indebtedness for whatever of success he has had in this ministry of nearly forty years, to the tender and unceasing sympathy and help of this, his life-companion and faithful co-laborer in all good designs.

days, leaving about twelve years, since the parish was organized, that it has been without what might be called a settled ministry, and of these twelve, it ought to be stated, five fully are the years after the parish was set off before a church was organized, thus leaving seven only since that time. The longest pastorate was that of Rev. Mr. Colby, thirty-four years, one month, twenty-seven days, and, to name them according to their length: Rev. Mr. Reed, twenty-eight years, three months, ten days; Rev. Mr. Gurney, twenty-seven years, seven months, twenty-five days; Rev. Mr. Little, nine years, nine months, although his stay after installation was only eight years, five months, two days; Rev. Mr. Backus, seven years, nine months, three days; Rev. Mr. Edwards, five years, three months, twenty-seven days; Rev. Mr. Bliss, two years, eleven months, thirteen days; Rev. Mr. Packard, two years, five days; and your present pastor, one year, two months. Of the eight ministers who have preceded me, four, or just one half, have died and are buried in this place, and the sum of the years of their ministry is ninety-seven years, ten months and five days. Of the remaining four, two or just half, have died elsewhere, and closed their ministry on earth. Two yet remain. Having carefully examined the record of the ministry of these eight servants of the Lord in this place, I desire, in closing, to gratefully acknowledge the goodness of God in giving this people such a ministry, against whom in their living or dying, this church has brought no recorded accusation of unfaithfulness to their ordination vows—nay, rather the memory of them is embalmed in your hearts, and your thought of them is always with the tenderest and most sacred love. It is not always so in the history of churches, but I thank God to-day, in this, my sixth and last sermon, reviewing the history of this church, that what I have just said, is true of this ancient church, in looking back over one hundred and twenty years, nearly, of ministerial life and labor. To the praise of the riches of the divine mercy in Christ Jesus be this acknowledged concerning these His ministers.

Still another word. If there be a difference in the veneration and affectionate regard, in which you hold the memory of these various ministers of Christ, it is in favor of those, who lived in this place the longest, and took the children from their mothers' arms to instruct and train for Christ and heaven. It is now many years since he, whose ministry covered more than four and thirty years, walked these streets, and taught from house to house as well as in the sanctuary on the sabbath day the wonderful things of this gospel, but little children hear from the lips of their parents the name of Philip Colby, spoken with such tender love, that they know him to have been a good man in their father's and mother's day.

2d. To complete the summary of these years, I will add, that this church has been invited to sit in council ninety-four times. Five ministers have recorded four hundred and seven marriages, and three ministers have recorded four hundred and forty-nine deaths and funerals. Five hundred and thirty-five, according to the records, have united with the church, sixty-three by letter, and four hundred, seventy-two by profession. Sixty-five dismissions from the church are recorded, and twenty have been excluded or cut off by excommunication. One hundred and eleven children have been baptized, on the faith of believing parents. What is noticeable and sadly so to such as accept the covenant as for the children as well as the parents, is the marked neglect of the ordinance, which is the sign and symbol of that covenant — the sacrament sealed in the blood of Jesus. And still another noticeable feature in this review and summing up of results of labor, is the tendency to wait for seasons of special interest, and rely upon special effort to the neglect of ordinary, every day effort, and living continually for Christ, expecting and looking for results in the saving and sanctifying of souls, day by day. Precious as have been seasons of reviving from the Lord, all the more sad and melancholy have been the years and months of declension and decline, when the ways of Zion mourned, and few came

to her solemn feasts. Oh! that I might understand better myself, and lead all my hearers to feel how sweet and satisfying and beautiful is a continuous glow and fervor in the christian life, and an ever growing delight in the way of the Lord. Let this be more and more the history of this church — a growth with no check — a recovery of the soul from its lost and low estate, with no relapse — a revived, saved, sanctified state, with no return to the world — its beggarly elements, and no declining from the right way. So shall be realized in its precious fulfillment what is written concerning "the path of the just, as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." So shall be understood the meaning of this prophecy, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous. They shall inherit the land forever — the branch of my planting — the work of my hands," saith the Lord, "that I may be glorified."

LIST OF MEMBERS IN 1876.

With such difficulty and painstaking as they only understand who have had experience in dealing with imperfect records we arrive at length to a complete and accurate list of the present members of the church, arranged in the order of their uniting. So far as possible, we have given the full name, and in the case of married women, the maiden name in brackets.

List of present Members of the Church.

Ab. signifies absent from the place.

1818.

July 26. NANCY (*Gwinneth*), widow of Calvin Shaw.

1824.

April 11. MARIA KEITH.

May 23. CLARINDA (*Richmond*), widow of Seth Fuller.

" " ELIZABETH WHITE (*Parsons*), widow of A. G. Pratt.

1831.

June 12. DANIEL ALDEN.

" " LUCY (*Hartwell*), wife of Daniel Alden.

July 24. HANNAH (*Fobes*), widow of Daniel L. Hayward.

Oct. 16. LOIS GODFREY (*Hathaway*), widow of A. D. Clark.

" " SARAH SHAW (*Hathaway*), widow of D. G. Clark.

" " JULIA (*Wilbar*), wife of Oliver Keith.

" " NAHUM KEITH.

" " SARAH SHAW (*Perkins*), widow of John A. Keith.

" " ELIJAH EATON PERKINS, Deacon, 1850.

" " HENRY CLAY PRATT. [*ab.*]

" " JULIA ANN (*Kingman*), wife of Jared Pratt.

" " MELINDA (*Shaw*), wife of Jonathan C. Pratt.

" " ADALINE SHAW.

Nov. 27. DIANA WILLIAMS (*Eaton*), wife of Oliver Eaton.
" " OLIVE (*White*), widow of Solomon Eaton.
" " HOLDEN WILBAR KEITH, Deacon, 1850.
" " ROSINA (*Cushman*), wife of Eliakim Leonard.

1834.

Oct. 19. ELIZABETH EDDY (*Hall*), wife of Elijah E. Perkins.

1842.

Nov. 27. EUNICE ALDRICH.
" " LUCY (*Crooker*), widow of Zephaniah Shaw.
" " GEORGE SANDERSON WILBAR.
" " OLIVER CROMWELL WILBAR.

1843.

Jan'y. 8. MARY ELIZABETH (*Shaw*), wife of Justin Andrews.
" " CASSANDRA WHITMAN SHAW.
" " ELVIRA WILLIAMS SHAW. [*ab.*]
" " NATHANIEL SOUTHWORTH. [*ab.*]
" " SOLOMON WHITE, Deacon, 1863.

1845.

July 20. HARRIET (*Robbins*), widow of Joshua Washburn.

1847.

April 11. LOUISA (*Staples*), wife of George S. Wilbar.

1850.

Dec. 15. EVELINA FOBES HAYWARD.
" " EMERY ARNOLD JOHNSON.
" " NANCY WHITMAN (*Fobes*), wife of Holden W. Keith.
" " KEZIAH LEONARD (*Hathaway*), wife of S. White.

1852.

Sept. 5. JUSTIN ANDREWS.
Nov. 5. SORANUS WENTWORTH.
" " SOPHIA WAPLES (*Kingman*), wife of S. Wentworth.
" 6. BETSEY BARKER (*Pratt*), widow of I. N. Perkins.
" " URSULA (*Gwinneth*), wife of O. H. Shaw. [*ab.*]

1853.

March 6. JOSHUA FOBES.
" " CHLOE (*Keith*), wife of Joshua Fobes.
" " JOB HARRINGTON JOHNSON.
" " VASSAL KEITH.

March 6, Cornelia (*Fobes*), wife of Vassal Keith.
July 4, Hannah (*Huron*), widow of Galen Conant.
" " Dordania Keith (*Pratt*), wife of T. J. Pratt.
Sept. 4. Ellen Maria (*Shaw*), wife of N. Williams Keith.
" " Sarah Dennis White.
Nov. 6. Salona (*Eaton*), widow of Solomon White.

1854.

May 7. Mary Ann (*Hoard*), wife of Stillman Tucker.

1858.

May 9. Jane Wing (*Pratt*), wife of Martin Dunbar. [*ab.*]
" " Williams Eaton.
" " Rebecca Leavitt (*Caswell*), widow of S. White.
July 4. Elizabeth Maria Alden.
" " Jared Foster Alden.
" " Lydia Augusta (*Waldron*), wife of P. S. Doty. [*ab.*]
" " Julia Ann Washburn (*Clark*), wife of I. Dunham.
" " Mary Elizabeth (*Richmond*), wife of Geo. Eaton.
" " Naomi (*Keith*), wife of Williams Eaton.
" " Nahum Williams Keith.
" " Isaac Eaton Macomber.
" " Celia Shaw (*White*), wife of Isaac E. Macomber.
" " Lucretia Eaton (*Perkins*), wife of Enoch Pratt.
" " Anna Shaw (*Pratt*), widow of J. G. Thompson.
" " Cynthia (*Kingman*), widow of R. W. Waldron.
[First united 1828, Aug. 17.]
" " George Barstow Whitmarsh.
Sept. 5. Wales Hayward, Deacon, 1863.
Nov. 7. Abby Grant (*McCurdy*), widow of E. C. Keith.

1860.

March 1. Joshua Padelford.

1862.

May 4. James Monroe Alden.
" " Mary Brooks (*Clark*), wife of James M. Alden.
" " Harriet (*Thompson*), wife of Ruel W. Eaton.
" " Avery Fobes Hooper.
" " Puella Frances (*Dean*), wife of J. E. Keith.
" " Sarah Howard (*Cobb*), wife of John A. Keith.

1862.

May 4. Thalia Maria (*Keith*), wife of E. H. Macomber.
" " Sally Kingman (*Waldron*), wife of B. W. Mendell.
July 6. Charles Edwards Alden.
" " Susan Elizabeth (*Weston*), wife of C. E. Alden.
" " Susan Matilda (*Pratt*), wife of Jared F. Alden.
" " Lydia Jane (*Holmes*), wife of Amos D. Clark.
" " Fanny Kingman (*Pratt*), wife of Avery F. Hooper.
" " Harriet (*Fobes*), widow of Justin Howard. [*ab.*]
" " Lois Hathaway (*Perkins*), wife of E. Howard. [*ab*].
" " Maria Elizabeth (*Waldron*), widow of A. Johnson.
" " Sarah Pratt Keith.
" " Charles Henry Lawrence.
" " Jane Gurney (*Pratt*), widow of Geo. L. Oakes.
" " Annie Maria (*Pratt*), wife of Jeremiah K. Pratt.
" " Cordania Elizabeth (*Perkins*) widow of H. O. Pratt.
" " Juliette (*Pratt*), wife of E. A. Richmond. [*ab.*]
" " Chloe (*Atwood*), widow of Philander Sampson.
" " Mary King (*Keith*), widow of Zachariah Weston.
" " Clarissa Pratt (*Keith*), wife of Wm. E. White.
" " Maria Cook (*Dean*), wife of Daniel E. White.
Sept. 7. Andrew Alden.
" " Abigail Whitman (*Thompson*), wife of A. Alden.
" " Sarah Emily (*Davis*), wife of W. Cushing. [*ab.*]
" " Susan Dean (*Pease*), widow of C. F. Eldridge. [*ab.*]
" " Louisa Edson Hathaway.
" " James Richmond.
" " Annie Gardner (*Thompson*), wife of S. A. Sampson.
" " Daniel Eaton White.

1866.

March 1. Julia Pratt.
" " Louisa Pratt.
May 6. Eliza Ann Pratt.

1868.

March 1. Oliver Eaton.
" " Augustus Pratt.
" " Emily Maria (*Eaton*), wife of Augustus Pratt.

1868.
March 1. Anna Maria (*Nants*), wife of William Shaw.
" " Benjamin Franklin Tinkham.
" " Hannah (*White*), wife of Benjamin F. Tinkham.
July 3. Lucy Maria (*Williams*), wife of Hiram N. Pratt.
Sept. 4. Julia Maria (*Tinkham*), wife of W. C. Holbrook.
1869.
Jan. 1. Henry Luther Edwards, Pastor, 1867. [*ab.*]
" " Mary Blankenship (*Thomas*), wife of H. L. Edwards.
1870.
March 6. Celia (*Hayward*), wife of Wales Hayward.
May 1. Eliza Frances (*Gurney*), wife of Job H. Johnson.
July 3. Susan Loring (*Holmes*), widow of A. S. Pratt.
1871.
Jan. 1. George Melvin Wilbar.
Sept. 3. Joseph Hathaway.
[First united 1833, May 16.]
" " Lucy (*Alden*), wife of Joseph Hathaway.
[First united 1831, Oct. 16.]
" " Emma Roberts Hathaway.
1872.
March 3. Jemima Williams (*King*), widow of Jared Pratt.
" " Maria Otis (*Pratt*), widow of Albert Washburn.
1874.
March 1. Harriet Maria (*Drake*), wife of I. E. Perkins.
" " Eliza Jane (*Harrington*), wife of Jas. Richmond.
May 10. Leonard Gibbs.
" " Sylvia Wade (*White*), wife of Leonard Gibbs.
" " Anna Williams Hathaway.
" " Lizzie Florence Howes.
" " Anna Davis Pratt.
" " Jared Warren Pratt.
July 5. George Henry Clark. [*ab.*]
" " Hannah Conant (*Hayward*), wife of G. H. Clark.
" " Samuel Hopkins Emery, Pastor, 1874.
" " Julia (*Reed*), wife of S. Hopkins Emery.
" " Joseph Warren Shaw Gibbs.
" " Emma Eliza (*Sherman*), wife of J. W. S. Gibbs.

1874.

July 5. Sarah Isadora Hathaway.
" " Susie Rebecca Johnson.
" " Eva Maria Keith. [*ab.*]
" " Lucy Frances Keith.
" " Ellen Frances Macomber.
" " Jairus Hathaway Perkins.
" " Jeannie Cornish Perkins.
" " Mary Sawyer Perkins.
" " Abby Sampson (*Wentworth*), wife of C. Peterson.
" " Catharine (*Cummings*), wife of Otis Pratt.
" " Enoch Pratt.
" " Lysander Richmond.
" " Lucy Eveline Richmond.
" " Mary Jane Shields.
" " Charles Sumner Tinkham.
" " William Warren Tinkham.
" " Laura Marietta Wilbar.
Sept. 6. Charles Herbert Alden.
" " Herbert Augustus Pratt.
" " Helen Maria Sherman.
Nov. 1. Flora Marion (*Pratt*), wife of E. Padelford.

1875.

Jan. 3. Edward Clinton Andrews.
" " Emma Louise Andrews.
" " Helen Sylvia (*Gibbs*), wife of George E. Cates.
" " Albion Augustus Keith.
" " Abby Judson (*Vaughan*), wife of Albion A. Keith.
" " Abiathar Williams Leonard.
" " Mary Elizabeth (*Andrews*), wife of A. W. Leonard.
" Ida Louise (*Waterman*), wife of Joshua F. Packard.

1876.

Jan. 2. Eliza Jane (*Witherell*), wife of J. C. Osborne.
March 5. George Emerson Cates.

☞If every member of the church will enter at this place all additions, and mark accurately dismissions and deaths, the list may be preserved accurate and complete in the future. [*See Errata et attenda*; *next page.*]

ERRATA ET ADDENDA.

It is seldom that a hundred pages of printed matter come from the press with so little call for correction. The young firm in Middleborough have done themselves and their town credit in the way they have executed their work. The mistakes found are almost too trivial to be named.

On page 9, eleven lines from the top, there is one *that* too many.

On page 22, third line from beginning of note, the second *of* should be omitted

On page 35, twenty second line from top, *who* is found instead of *who*. On page 77, in note, Caswell's name should be *W. Irving* instead of *Irving W.* On page 84, in list of members, Clarinda (Richmond), widow of Seth Fuller, should be marked as uniting *April* 11 instead of *May* 23, 1824. On the same page, Mrs. Lois G. widow of A. D. Clark is to be marked *deceased March* 31, 1876—this excellent sister having been called home, since this list was given to the printer. On page 86, [*First united* 1828 *Aug.* 17] belongs only to the name of *Cynthia* (*Kingman*), *Widow of R. W. Waldron*, and should have been directly under that name. On page 87, [*ab.*] should follow the name of Mrs. *Mendell*. On page 88, [*ab.*] should follow the names of Mrs. *Edwards* and Mrs. *Clark*. On page 89, amend the printer's Latin at bottom of page—*addenda* for *attenda*.

On page 20, is the remark, "It has been said that the church really died out and became extinct," followed by the statement toward the bottom of the page, "we have no knowledge of the organizing of any other church than the Baptist, after February 16th, 1748."

I am informed the statement is found in Rev. Mr. Backus' Unabridged History of the Baptist churches, that a Baptist church was organized in Titicut the 4th of February, 1749, consisting of sixteen members, which church was afterwards dissolved. If this be so, we can easily understand how this Baptist church organized about a year later than the New Light church, the subject of our history, and with the same number of members, has been confounded with it, and its dissolution been made to apply to the wrong church.

The Baptist church has just received a pastor, Rev. George L. Ruberg, who was installed Feb. 8, 1876, with the following services:

Reading the Scriptures and Prayer,
By Rev. S. H. Emery, of North Middleborough.
Sermon, by Rev. C. H. Spalding, of Arlington.
Prayer of Installation, by Rev. H. B. Marshall, of Kingston.
Fellowship of Churches, by Rev. N. Fullerton, of South Abington.
Charge to the Pastor, by Rev. Joseph Barber, of Cochesct.
Address to the Church, by Rev. G. G. Fairbanks of Middleborough.
Benediction, by the Pastor.

On page 40, are found the names of some, who studied for the ministry in Rev. Mr. Gurney's time. At a later period, we find the name of Francis G. Pratt, son of Greenleaf, son of William, and who married a daughter of Zachary Eddy, Esq. of Middleborough. He was ordained at South Malden in 1846, and now resides in Middleborough. Another resident minister on the Bridgewater side, is Rev. Darius Dunbar, a Baptist minister.

On page 51, occurs the notice of Rev. Mr. Colby previous to his settlement in North Middleborough. To make certain some statements for which I relied on Dr. Huntington's funeral sermon, I wrote to the pastor of the church in Hallowell, Me., and received the following:—

"Philip Colby and wife united with the church August 2d, 1810, Mrs. Colby being baptized. The same day, two sons, Harrison Gray Otis, and Philip Hamilton Van Rensellaer were baptized, Dr. Gillett being the pastor of the church."

Thus my account is confirmed, with the exception of the month, August instead of July.

On page 73, is found an allusion to one of the business men who have originated in the place, which I am able to supplement by facts furnished by Zebulon Pratt of Bridgewater.

William Pratt born in Bridgewater in 1740, son of Benjamin, born in Bridgewater 1719; son of Benjamin, born in Weymouth 1698; son of Joseph born in Weymouth 1665; son of Joseph, born in Weymouth 163—; son of Phineas, born in England 1593, who came to this country as one of Weston's Colony, in the Sparrow, in 1622. Benjamin, the father of William, built vessels of forty or fifty tons on the Titicut river, with which, he and his sons carried on trade South. The father and three sons dying South of yellow fever, William settled up the business and bought a farm, to which he added from time to time till it grew to about four hundred acres. His house was on the North Middleborough side of the Titicut river, not far from the old Indian fort, known also as the Indian Weir, where Winslow and Hopkins in 1621 were entertained by the Indians. Here he built vessels, and by leave of the General Court, in connection with Capt. Edson, erected a dam across the river, and built on the south side a grist mill, a saw mill, a fulling mill, and a linseed oil mill. Capt. Edson built mills on the north side. William Pratt had a store, a blacksmith and shoe making shop, and attended also to his large farm. A man of much worldly business, he did not neglect religious things but "died in a strong, well-founded hope of a blessed immortality." He was an earnest patriot. As captain of a militia company, he took a prominent part in the war of the Revolution. He had a sister Sarah, who married Judge Paris of Maine, whose only son, Albion K. filled many distinguished offices in the State. He had a son Enoch, who was a minister—a son Isaac, who carried on the Iron business in Wareham, the father of Isaac and Enoch, in the same business in Boston and Baltimore, and Zebulon K. whose sons, Zebulon, Benjamin, Jeremiah, and Martin have been largely engaged in the book trade.

Elijah E. Perkins and son, and others are engaged in the boot and shoe trade in the place. The Bartlett Brothers manufacture tacks and nails.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

I always liked the old fashion of publishing the list of subscribers, that the generations to come after, might know who encouraged the work of publication in the ancient time. Without any special effort, the names, which follow, have been obtained, to ensure the expense of printing—one hundred and fifty one subscribers for two hundred and sixty three copies. Some of the names will be recognized as those of enterprising natives of the place, who entered into business elsewhere, to be largely prospered but not to forget their early home still lives in their loving remembrance. *The letter of one of these is appended.*

NAMES OF SUBSCRIBERS, RESIDENT IN MIDDLEBORO.

Alden, Andrew
Alden, James M.
Alden, Theodore H.
Andrews, Justin
Beals, Solomon F.
Carver, Josiah T.
Clark, Amos D.
Clark, David R.
Clark, Lois (Mrs.)
Dean, Edward M.
Doane, George H.
Eaton, Cyrus.
Eaton, Oliver.
Eaton, Ruel W. (Mrs.)
Fuller, Seth (Mrs.)
Gibbs, Joseph Warren S.
Harlow, Ivory H.
Hathaway, Joseph (M. D.)
Hathaway, Otis W.
Holbrook, William C.
Holmes, Benjamin E.
Hooper, Avery F.
Johnson, Emery
Peirce, James E.
Perkins, Elijah E.
Perkins, Isaac E.
Perkins, Jairus H.
Perkins, Sumner
Pratt, Augustus
Pratt, Christopher C. K.
Pratt, Enoch
Pratt, Hiram N.
Pratt, Jared
Pratt, J. Warren
Pratt, Jeremiah K.
Pratt, Martin V. B.
Pratt, Nathan F. C.
Pratt, Otis (Mrs.)
Pratt, T. Jefferson
Richmond, Elisha W.
Richmond, Hiram L.
Richmond, Lysander
Robinson, Everett
Robinson, Dr. Morrill(Mrs.)
Sampson, Shadrack A.
Shaw, Cassandra W.

Keith, Nahum
Keith, N. Williams
Keith, Sarah P.
Kingman, Calvin D.
Kingman, Sally R.
Leonard, Cornelius
Macomber, Elbridge H.
Macomber, Isaac E.
Oakes, Jane G. (Mrs.)
Paun, Amos D. (M. D.)
Shaw, J. Addison.
Shaw, William.
Shaw, Elbridge G.
Tinkham, Benjamin F.
Waldron, Cynthia (Mrs.)
White, Daniel E.
White, Solomon
White, W. Emery
Whitmarsh, George
Whitmarsh, Joshua

NAMES OF SUBSCRIBERS, RESIDENT IN BRIDGEWATER.

Alden, Charles F.
Bartlett, Bradford
Conant, Virgil V.
Crane, Joshua E.
Dunbar, E. Frank
Dunbar, Jane W. (Mrs.)
Dunbar, Lewis B.
Fobes, Bela
Fobes, Joshua
Gibbs, Leonard
Hayward, Ariston
Hayward, Hannah (Mrs.)
Hayward Wales
Johnson, Job H.
Keith, Ambrose
Keith, Ann (Mrs.)
Keith, Avery F.
Keith, George F.
Keith, Henry A.
Keith, Holden W.
Keith, LaFayette
Keith, Lloyd
Keith, Loring
Keith, Solomon
Keith, Sumner
Keith, Vassal
Keith, Zephaniah
Kingman, Philip D.
Latham, William
McKeen, Lewis L.
Parsons, Lloyd
Peirce, Clark
Pratt, Charles K.
Pratt, Elizabeth (Mrs.)
Pratt, Zebulon.
Richmond, Israel, Jr.
Richmond, James
Shields, John
Sturtevant, Harriet (Mrs.)
Tucker, Stillman (Mrs.)
Walch, Henry
Washburn, Seth (Mrs.)
Wilbar, George S.
Wilbar, Isaac S.
Wilbar, O. Cromwell
Wyman, Josephine (Mrs.)

NAMES OF SUBSCRIBERS, RESIDENT IN OTHER PLACES.

Alger, Roland F.	*Cochesett.*
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Baylies, Edmund	*Taunton.*
*Capen, Nahum (LL D.)	*Boston.*
Clark, George H.	*Brockton.*
Cowdrey, Arthur H. (M. D.)	*Stoneham.*
Crocker, Samuel L.	*Taunton.*
Dean, David	*Taunton.*
Deane, Eleanor L. (Mrs.)	*Taunton.*
Dunbar, Samuel O.	*Taunton.*
Emery, Aaron F.	*Boston.*
Emery, Ann L. (Mrs.)	*Philadelphia, Pa.*
Emery, Francis F.	*Boston.*
Emery, Francis W. R.	*Taunton.*
Emery, Joseph W.	*Quincy, Illinois.*
Emery, Joshua (Rev.)	*Boston.*
Emery, Samuel H. Jr.	*Quincy, Illinois.*
Haskins, Myrick	*Lakeville.*
Herrick, William A.	*Cambridge.*
Howard, Embert	*Brockton.*
Phillips, William H. (Mrs.)	*Taunton.*
Pratt, Abner K.	*Boston.*
Pratt, Enoch	*Baltimore, Md.*
Pratt, Isaac, Jr.	*Boston.*
Reed, Edgar H.	*Taunton.*
Reed, Henry G.	*Taunton.*
Reed, Sampson	*Boston.*
Richmond, David	*Raynham.*

*Dr. Capen is brother of Robert Capen, M. D., who was the first resident physician of Titicut and who was succeeded by Dr. Morrill Robinson in 1827, who was the "beloved physician" of the place until 1873, the year of his death. His place is now filled by Dr. Amos D. Paun. Dr. Hathaway is a resident but out of practice, confining himself to chemistry, in which he is very eminent. He is also skilled in portrait painting.

Richmond, Eliezer	*Lakeville.*
Richmond, Jonathan	*Taunton.*
Sanford, Enoch (Rev.)	*Raynham.*
Shaw, Edwin	*Fall River.*
Shaw, Elvira W.	*Taunton.*
Tobey, Joshua B. (Mrs.)	*Wareham.*
Vickery, Charles R.	*Taunton.*
Washburn, Leonard	*Lakeville.*
Wilbur, Joseph	*Taunton.*
Wilbur, Seth D.	*Raynham.*

The subscribers, whose names appear above, have taken from one to twenty copies, each, and thus provide for the cost of publication. Whatever is realized by the sale of other copies will be devoted to the procuring of an appropriate memorial stone for the three Indians, referred to on pages, 12—15 of this work.

The letter of one of the subscribers, accompanying his subscription will be read with pleasure by the inhabitants of the parish, which has shared so largely in his liberal contributions:

Baltimore, Nov. 1, 1875.

Rev. S. Hopkins Emery:

Dear Sir: I am pleased to receive your letter of the 29th Oct. and always glad to hear from my native place. I hope to pay it a visit before long but time is scarce with me.

I will subscribe for twenty copies of your work. Send one to me and give the balance to the Principal of the Pratt Free School to distribute among the pupils as he thinks best. Herewith please find an order for ten dollars.

Yours respectfully,

Enoch Pratt.

ERRATA IN LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

Ten lines from top of page 92, *which* between *home* and *still*, would help the grammar and complete the sense. Same page, *Middleborough* instead of *Middleboro* would better agree with the orthography of our book.

The admirers of pure alphabetical lists, of which we are one, need not be told that the columns on page 93 are needed to complete page 92; a blemish of arrangement which a closer oversight of the press might have prevented.

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*As this page was going to press, a message came to me from Mrs. Tobey of Wareham, that her mother was in the habit of saying that *her* father, Jeremiah Keith, cast the first cannon which were ever made in this country. Curious to know the facts in the case, I inquired of Williams Latham, Esq., of Bridgewater, authority in all these matters, and through him obtained the following information:

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Jeremiah Keith, Sr., started a furnace on the east side of the turnpike, not far from the river on the Bridgewater side, in 1776, where he manufactured screws for paper mills, shot and other things, but probably not cannon or fire arms. He was interested however, without doubt, with Amos Keith and others in the Forge and Foundry in Titicut, where now the Bartletts manufacture nails and where cannon and cannon balls were cast. This mill privilege is a very old one, and I am so fortunate as to have found a copy of the original lease of land from the Indian proprietors to certain parties for this purpose.

David Charles, Isaac Wanno and wife Amey, Anthony Walnum and wife Martha, Samuel Robin and wife Rebecca, Joseph Peter and wife Bethia, children and heirs of Charles Ahas of Titicut, deceased, with consent of our mother, Martha Ahas, for 25 shillings, yearly, lease to Capt. Edson, Edward Mitchell, Edward Fobes, Samuel Washburn, and Ephraim Howard, land to set up Iron Works at Titicut, to build a dam and pond their land as much as is needful, April 1, 1707. Nathan Brett, Samuel Crossman witnesses.

The above taken from the scrap book of Isaac Fobes of Scotland, Bridgewater, p. 14, as copied by Williams Latham.

May 5, 1725, N. Willis and others transferred their interest in what is called "Iron Works brook and Wanno's land" to Nehemiah Washburn. Jan. 24, 1728—9, Josiah Edson transferred his interest in land "where the old Forge stood" to Nehemiah Washburn. Dec. 10, 1744, articles of agreement were drawn up between some fifteen persons, who were to manufacture hollow ware at "the Forge brook near Capt. Nehemiah Washburn," who lived on the south side of the brook.

It was here at "the Forge brook," cannon were cast solid at the time of the Revolution and as Judge Mitchell, the historian of Bridgewater, told Mr. Latham, they were probably taken solid to East Bridgewater or South Abington and bored and finished off

Small fire arms were made in North Bridgewater in 1747, and Hugh Orr, a Scotchman, was in the same business in East Bridgewater, so says Judge Mitchell in his history of Bridgewater, pages 58, 59, but the cannon cast in Titicut at the time of the Revolution were among the first probably, if not the very first in the country.

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N. B. Every name found in the book is here registered, but it may occur several times on the same page. I remember my friend Drake, who recently passed away, complained of the Index in the Ministry of Taunton, because it failed to give all the names. I confess it is a wearisome work both to the author and the printer, but it is a labor of love, which some appreciate and certainly enhances the value of a historical volume.

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On page 101 *Cowms* should be *Cowins.*

On page 103, the initial letter O is out of place, preceding M and N, as may be plainly seen, proving that in printing as in other things, there is "an end of all perfection," if not "of making many books."

On page 77, in a note are given the names of seven who lost their lives in the service of their country, in the war of the Rebellion. Two others should be added, who contracted disease which in after years terminated fatally—Albert G. Pratt and his son, Harrison O. Pratt.

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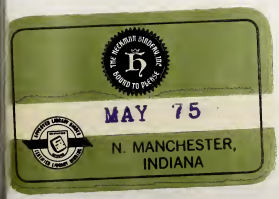
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